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# IRQUOIS RELIGION

AND

## ITS RELATION TO THEIR MORALS

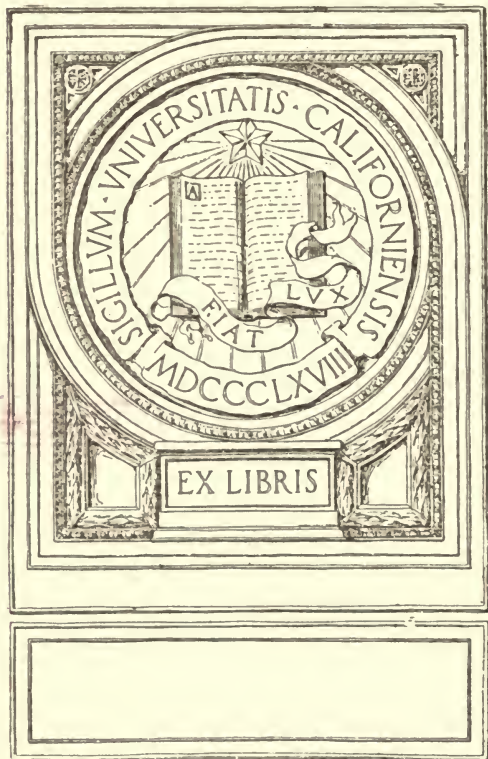
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# IROQUOIS RELIGION

AND

## ITS RELATION TO THEIR MORALS

BY

MORRIS WOLF

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DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SETTING.

### INTRODUCTION.

CENTURIES ago teachers of religion explained the relation of religion and morals by declaring that, as God had revealed, the way to salvation lay through earthly conduct. They approached their problem from a distinctly super-earthly point of view and they worked out their solution by means of the inspirational method. In recent years both a different point of view and a different method have been suggested because of the results obtained in such fields of social science as ethnology, anthropology and sociology. Students of religion and of morals have become aware not merely of the fact that, whether civilized or uncivilized, groups other than their own have genuine religions and moralities, but they have become aware also of the fact that the religions and moralities of civilized peoples have been influenced by the religions and moralities of such other groups. Consequently these students see the problem from a point of view characterized best perhaps as social, and attempt to work out a solution by means of the historical and comparative methods. Investigations by these methods were made rarely before the present generation because the worker in the field of religion or of morals has had to depend upon the results of the labors of his fellows in the allied fields of social science; and these fellow-laborers have got but recently beyond their own pioneer days.

It comes about therefore that at present he who seeks light upon the relation of religion and morals can find little. If he turn to the periodicals he may meet from time to time a brief article that endeavors to support, with only the evidence that a few pages can contain, some conclusions regarding the relation of religion and morals among numerous, as well as various, human groups. The scarcity of pertinent, periodical articles before the present century is indicated by a bibliography for the last decade of the nineteenth century, entitled

"Subject Index to Periodical Articles on Religion" and compiled by E. C. Richardson. Under the headings "Religion" and "Ethics" are mentioned as many as fifty different articles that deal with the relation of these activities; but of these fifty only two deal with the relation in that detached, scientific manner now so necessary. These two were written a generation ago by Professor C. H. Toy, one on "Ethics and Religion"<sup>1</sup> and the other on "The Religious Element in Ethical Codes."<sup>2</sup> Professor Toy discusses briefly the relation of religion and morals among many peoples and gives some evidence that supports his views. He affirms that there was a time when religion and ethics were practically identical, and furthermore that religion appears in the field of ethics as a sanction. These two conclusions are of interest because subsequent writers repeat them in order often to deny the first and generally to accept the second.

If the inquirer turns to the periodicals of this century he will find some noteworthy articles. In the *American Anthropologist* for 1910<sup>3</sup> is a ten page article by A. L. Kroeber on "The Morals of Uncivilized People" of which three pages are given to the problem of the relation of religion and morals. To Dr. Kroeber religion seems to have no inherent connection with morals, but both usually become associated intimately; for savages who have definite relations with the gods have also definite obligations. They have things to do or not to do. They have obligations, in other words, analogous to those we owe our fellows and therefore have obligations that are, or are very similar to, ethical obligations.

In *Folk-Lore* for 1915<sup>4</sup> appeared an article, about twice as long as that by Dr. Kroeber, on "The Religious Basis of Social Union." In this summary Dr. F. W. Bussell searches for the historical basis of social groupings among savages and in civilized communities. He is sure that a study of social organizations will reveal the fact that, whatever their form or conception, in the past there has lain in them some vaguely religious thought such as that of ancestral spirits, or of the

<sup>1</sup> *Pop. Sci. Mon.*, XXXVI (1889-90), 727-744.

<sup>2</sup> *Int. Jour. Ethics*, I (1890-91), 289-311.

<sup>3</sup> *N. S.*, XII, 437 sq.

<sup>4</sup> XXXVI, 339-357.

Earth Mother and her retinue, or of the personal mana embodied either in the strong man of the crisis or in the son of a divine house, or of the incarnate deity worshiped in the person of the ruler, or finally of the medieval king who still was held to be God's lieutenant. But Dr. Bussell notes with foreboding that he can find not one religious idea surviving in the body politic to-day, which idea is an effective element or motive of social harmony and cohesion.

In the same year the *American Anthropologist*<sup>5</sup> published an article by Elsie Clews Parsons entitled "Links between Religion and Morality in Early Culture." The author is content simply to identify moral with social conduct and to give illustrations of the supernatural sanctions attaching to such conduct. These illustrations, from savage life the world over, occupy sixteen pages and only those are presented which bear witness to the connection of religion and morality. Some of the evidence shows how supernatural powers are invoked or otherwise sought in order to punish or otherwise control those who run counter to the prevailing rules and customs.

These articles, at any rate, assure the inquirer that the connection between religion and morals is regarded as a real connection. He turns hopefully therefore to books for a more detailed picture of the actual relationships. But in them he finds that the authors have slight interest in his problem, that the remarks they make regarding it are, as in the periodicals, generalities supported, if at all, by a few pages of evidence culled from many sources, and that no author has as his main theme the relation of religion and morals. An examination of a number of the more widely known books on religion and on morals soon makes clear the little that the modern investigator, with his scientific attitude and his new methods, has been able to do so far toward solving the problem and what have been his handicaps and shortcomings.

Almost a generation ago the relationship was discussed by Wundt in a hundred pages of the first volume of his "Ethics."<sup>6</sup> His chief purpose in examining religion was to determine its ethical value. Ethics he defined in the terms we commonly

<sup>5</sup> N. s., XVII (1915), 41 sq.

<sup>6</sup> 39-148 passim. Tr. from 2d German edition (1892) by Titchener, Gulliver and Washburn, in 3 vols. (London and New York, 1897.)

use, namely, virtues and vices. Custom consequently must be distinguished from morality. Religion he defined thus: "All ideas and feelings are religious which refer to an ideal existence." In order to determine the ethical value of religion Wundt found it necessary in his one hundred pages to examine the religion and morals of peoples both civilized and uncivilized, both ancient and modern. A complete presentation was naturally impossible, and he contented himself with stating the results of his study accompanied by such selections from the innumerable data as were consonant with these results. The following summary contains his main conclusions.

In the myths not only are religious, ethical and other elements included but at first there is no differentiation of one element from another. In time, however, the religious and ethical elements become differentiated and the ethical elements in turn become partially detached from the religious. Consequently no clearly defined distinction can be made between the sphere of religion and that of morality, and the connection between the two spheres varies in intimacy. Mythology, for example, shows on the one hand that gods and heroes possess evil as well as good traits. They are both courageous and cunning, both just and deceitful. Such evil qualities are bound to affect the ethical side of religion. On the other hand, the notion of deity includes not only the thought that the gods are representatives of some ideal or supersensible order but also the thought that they are patterns or ideals for men to copy. When the time comes, moreover, that men think of ideal moral exemplars or of an ideal moral order, that thought will find expression in religion. When does that time come? Nature gods as such never become really moral. As gods of lightning and of other natural phenomena they are too unlike man to affect his moral qualities. But when they become dissociated from natural phenomena and become real gods, they also become the "exalted exemplars of every sort of valued ability and men try to imitate that god-like life." It is obvious therefore that, although ethical elements may be found in any form of religion, the genuinely ethical religions are those in which the ethical has become predominant. Such religions are those of civilization and are initiated by a single personality that becomes the moral ideal.



There are at least two other noteworthy points of contact between the religious and the moral, according to Wundt. One point is that in the myth may be found ideas of reward and punishment which are meted out by superhuman powers, in accordance with human conduct. This belief came about as the notions of life after death got tied up with ideas of reward and punishment and with a heaven and a hell, so that there resulted, through the strengthening of moral impulses, the desire for good and the rejection of evil. The other point is that the idea of a great ancestor as an exemplar is a moral influence. For this ancestor worship, really filial piety, lies back of the respect paid to living parents and to the aged. It is this reverence for great ancestors that evokes a sort of religious reverence for rulers and other great living men. In fact there may result the actual deification of the ruler. The religious coloring thus given in the first stages of human development to the relation between the ruler and the ruled contributes to the establishment of a moral order in society and helps to evoke those impulses that manifest themselves in unselfish devotion to the good of others and to some general end.

Wundt summarized his discussion in these words: "The farther back we go, the more completely do the expressions of the moral and the religious feelings coincide. . . . Wherever religion has meant the postulating of an ideal order of the universe, the strongest religious motives have been furnished by moral requirements; while on the other hand, a firm belief in the existence of this ideal world has exerted an equally powerful influence upon the development of the moral life and of the moral ideas, partly by way of the conception of reward and punishment, but chiefly through the creation of ideally perfect moral exemplars."

Harold Hoeffding touched upon the relation of religion and morals in "Philosophy of Religion,"<sup>7</sup> which appeared thirteen years ago. Like Wundt he thought of ethics in terms of virtues and vices. He believed that religion in its lowest forms has no ethical significance, for the deities are powers on which man depends but are not patterns of conduct or administrators of an ethical world-order. Nevertheless, out of purely natural

<sup>7</sup> Tr. by B. E. Meyer. (London, 1906.)

forces that could be defied or evaded the deities become ethical powers that men could not or would not defy, and so the great aims of human life become the aims of the gods.

Reference often is made to three American writers, Ames, Leuba and King, whose books on religion appeared a few years after that by Hoeffding. E. S. Ames in "Psychology of Religious Experience"<sup>8</sup> took up the problem long enough to say that when custom attains moral character, morality being defined in terms similar to those used by Wundt and Hoeffding, religion centers in moral ideals and in rational methods of control. This process of ethicizing religion develops along with the practical and ethical development of the race.

J. H. Leuba in "Psychological Study of Religion"<sup>9</sup> defined religion and morals more broadly than did the writings examined above. Religion is "that part of human experience in which man feels himself in relation with powers of psychic nature, usually personal powers, and makes use of them." Regarding morals he says, "The social life is the matrix of moral sentiments." Leuba is of the opinion that among savages it is common to find moral ideas and religious beliefs independent, although tribal customs and religion are connected closely since the gods help to enforce customs. "Morality and religion do not need each other in order to come into existence, but, when they have appeared, religious beliefs are speedily called upon for the gratification of moral needs."

Irving King in "Development of Religion"<sup>10</sup> devotes more space to the topic of the relation of religion and morals than is given in any of the other books so far mentioned, except that by Wundt. He examines, in fifteen of the eighteen pages that make up his eleventh chapter, the personal morality of the Australians in order to support his belief that primitive custom has a positive moral worth, because it may furnish the raw material for the higher conceptions of conduct which are of such moment for the history of morals and religion. He concludes that "It is safe to say that, in the case of religion at least, the love of justice, mercy and human kindness in general would never have developed as the expression of the

<sup>8</sup> Boston and New York, 1910.

<sup>9</sup> New York, 1912.

<sup>10</sup> New York, 1910.



will of a deity except as they appeared in the special relations of human life."

The two dozen pages on the relation of religion and morals scattered through the first part of Dewey and Tufts' "Ethics"<sup>11</sup> are suggestive. Ethics they define as "the science that deals with conduct, in so far as this is considered right or wrong, good or bad." As their discussion of morality advances from that of uncivilized groups onward, religion in each case receives attention. In speaking of life among uncivilized groups they voice the opinion that it is religion that gives the group "its highest authority, its fullest value, its deepest sacredness." Religion, then, is bound up closely with the group mores, and a new religion by its new demands may change the conception of conduct. In fact, as one studies various peoples it becomes apparent that religion is often the agency for evoking certain characteristics of the moral. Religion may emphasize the inward aspect of the moral. Religion may make clear the distinction between the higher or spiritual and the lower values of life. Religion may furnish the divine characters that become the ideals of conduct in this life. Among the Hebrews, for example, one finds that the moral ideals became a part of religion and thus their religion was ethicized. Their prophets were also moral reformers. On the other hand, among the Greeks religion became set to a great extent while the moral found a way of its own. Among us religion is confronted with a problem. Shall religion take on the newer ethical values: the scientific spirit that seeks to know the truth, the enhanced value of human worth and the consequent demands for higher types of social justice?

In the concluding paragraph of Part One the authors characterize the standpoints of religion and morals. The religious deals with man as related to the cosmos or to unseen powers, the relations being by kinship, or as subject, or as seeking more perfect fulfilment. The religious establishes fixed laws and sets up the awful choice between hell and heaven. But morality deals with men and their relations. The moral law can be approved, that is, criticized, and is stated in terms of rights and wrongs, goods and evils. Morality sets up principles and

<sup>11</sup> London and New York, 1913.

not irrevocable laws and it reshapes ideals, constantly working them out in conduct and rationalizing the social order.

It is interesting to pass from this text-book on morals to L. T. Hobhouse's original investigation in the same field, "Morals in Evolution."<sup>12</sup> The reader becomes convinced that this study is superior to any other of the kind. Hobhouse's conception of morality has a breadth that is consonant with the present tendency to define morals in terms of the attitudes, actions and organized practices of the people or peoples studied, and not simply in terms of virtues and vices. Two attributes are essential to morality according to Hobhouse, the one being the "conception of the Good" (p. 18) and the other being "the regulation of life" (p. 613). His definition of religion, unfortunately, is such as to preclude his recognition of some of the subtle connections between it and morals. Religion in its lowest forms, he says, is animism. Magic, which he defines in the now familiar terms of Frazer, is to be marked off from religion. Hobhouse illustrates how important the relation of religion and morals is felt to be, for he finds it necessary to devote one hundred and sixty pages (365-526), or about one quarter of his book on morals, to the religions of peoples in times past and present and in conditions of civilization and of barbarism in order to find the answer given by religion to the question, Whence comes the notion of moral obligation? Of course these pages can contain only a summary of the results of such an investigation. A dozen pages suffice to set forth beliefs and practices connected with souls, among civilized and uncivilized peoples on all the continents. The next half-dozen pages place in view the yet troublesome subject of magic. The supernormal and the mysterious are examined hastily in a few pages. Matter relating to "Myth, Culture, Heroes and Creators" finds sufficient space in another half-dozen pages. The next dozen present the polytheism of the ancients. Then, in a chapter of two score pages, an attempt is made to determine the ethical conceptions underlying magic, animism and polytheism. Two additional chapters complete the treatment, one dealing with Buddhism, Brahmanism and Taoism, the other with monotheism—Judaism and Christianity.

<sup>12</sup> 3d edition. (London, 1915.)

In presenting these subjects Hobhouse makes a number of remarks concerning the relation of religion and morals. Among the so-called primitive races customs are obeyed because breaches mean misfortune for the whole community, possibly since retribution is a consequence of wrong-doing. Such misfortune may be sent by a spirit that was wronged by the breach of the custom. So one finds that in the "lowest grades of ethical thought the sanction of conduct is found in taboos and other magical terrors or in the fear of vindictive and resentful spirits." Among the peoples whose thought and conduct are along these lines, magic has no moral purpose and the animistic spirits are unmoral essentially. They engender in man mere dread of vengeance so that social rules generally speaking are not conceived clearly as moral obligations. A forward step is found to have been taken among those peoples that have real gods, for they generally are connected definitely with ethics—they punish the guilty for their guilt, and so on. But even here ethical thinking is unclear since the gods themselves may do wrong. Monotheistic religions, with their all-good god and genuine ethical ideals, are really spiritual religions and bring newer ethical conceptions. They range humility, forgiveness, benevolence and brotherhood over against pride, resentment, mere love of kin, and interest mainly or solely in family life.

Recently there appeared in the field of religion a remarkable study by Emile Durkheim entitled "Elementary Forms of the Religious Life."<sup>13</sup> Morality is not the predominant interest in this study and he does not, in consequence, define it. Religion he does examine and define with much care. After two score pages of discussion concerning the nature of religion the following is set down: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them." Durkheim's object is to determine the origin and nature of religion. To support the conclusions he reaches, he wishes to examine a really primitive religion. He arrives finally at the opinion that the most primitive religion is totemism which is the religion of the clan, to him the

<sup>13</sup> Tr. by J. W. Swain. (London and New York, 1915.)

simplest social organization known. His investigation resolves itself therefore into a study of totemism and the clan, and is carried on among the Australians since among them both institutions were developed highly.

Durkheim has some striking statements to make regarding the relation of religion and morals (particularly pp. 167-226 *passim*, 387, 420). He concludes that religion and morality among these savages are identical. The social organization in which totemism obtains is bound up with religion because the members of a single clan are united by three essentially religious bonds: they have the same name and the same emblem, they believe that they have the same relations with the same categories of things, and they practice the same rites. In a word, they participate in the same totemic cult. Moreover, the totem is the source of the moral life of the clan since the beings of the same totem are bound together morally in duties of assistance, vendetta and so on. These duties constitute kinship. Durkheim then seeks the principle underlying totemism and discovers that the notion of *mana* is the root from which totemism has grown. Having gone so far he grapples for many pages with the problem: What is it that makes religion obligatory, that is, what form of the moral authority inheres in religion? He concludes that religious forces are moral because they are made up entirely of the impressions which this moral being, the group, arouses in those other moral beings, its individual members. The religious forces do not translate the manner in which physical things affect the senses, but they do translate the way in which the collective consciousness acts upon individual consciousnesses. Hence their authority is one form of the moral ascendancy of society over its members. Moreover, religious forces are also conceived of under material forms and therefore could not fail to be regarded as related closely to material things. Religious forces, then, dominate two worlds. They reside in men, but at the same time they are the vital principles of things; they animate minds and discipline them, and they also make plants grow and animals reproduce. "It is this double nature which has enabled religion to be like the womb from which come all the leading germs of civilization." Since religion has been made to embrace all of reality—the physical world as well as the moral—



the forces that move bodies as well as those that move minds have been conceived in a religious form. "That is how the most diverse methods and practices, both those that make possible the continuation of the moral life (law, morals, beaux-arts) and those serving the material life (the natural, technical and practical sciences), are either directly or indirectly derived from religion" (p. 223).

Several of the above mentioned writers hold a number of conclusions in common. All agree that a clearly defined distinction between the religious sphere and the moral can not be made. Although a few of them are of the opinion that there was once a close identity of the two spheres, most of them are in agreement with Leuba's thought that religion and morals probably had independent origins, but have become inter-related. Distinct as may have been the viewpoints from which the writers looked for evidence of the interconnection of the moral and the religious, the conclusions they reached have been complementary rather than contradictory. None denies that a people who have "real gods" also have ethical obligations that are sanctioned by these gods. Bussell approached the problem not from the side of deities but from that of social organization. Nevertheless he is sure that he recognizes notions concerning such organization that are essentially religious notions; and his opinion is acceptable to Durkheim, Dewey and Tufts, and others. Yet another approach was made by way of the conduct of individuals. Fully half the writers have stated that conduct is sanctioned frequently by supernatural powers. It is established with some definiteness then, that from the side of morals the conduct of individuals often shows religious influence in the form of belief or of sanction for the conduct; and that from the side of religion genuine deities are concerned not only with religious affairs but also with earthly conduct, since they approve or disapprove of forms of behavior.

The writers disagree upon one matter. Wundt, Hoeffding and Hobhouse say that in the "animistic stage" gods are not moral; Durkheim and others do not accept that statement. This difference in opinion is mentioned because it indicates the enormous handicap under which these pioneer investigators labored. None had at his disposal detailed studies of the rela-

tion of religion and morals among peoples in many times and places. The impulse on the part of these investigators, who have not been interested primarily in this relationship, nevertheless to make some track across the virgin field emphasizes the importance of the problem. It must become obvious that nothing final can be done until there exists a series of studies, based upon investigations among peoples everywhere and in every time, of the actual relationship obtaining between religions and moralities. If there be truth in that modern conception, historical continuity, a knowledge of the relationships historically is one essential element in the study of the relationship here among ourselves. Fortunately delay in acquiring such a series of studies is no longer necessary, since it is now possible both to find satisfactory working definitions of religion and of morals and to obtain with little difficulty the necessary data relative to conditions and life among peoples on all the continents and often relative to peoples of long ago. It is hoped that this examination of the relation of religion and morals among the Iroquois will initiate such a series of studies.

Such an investigation, to be of value, first must determine the nature and amount of evidence that is at hand, and secondly must acquaint itself with the setting in which Iroquois religion and morals functioned, that is, with the kind of country the Iroquois lived in, the kind of life they led, and the ways in which they controlled themselves. Upon such a basis a study of value can be made of the Iroquois religion, the changes in it that occurred since the advent of the Whites, and their moral life as touched by religion and as independent of it.

#### THE EVIDENCE.

The life of the Iroquois before the sixteenth century is known only in so far as it can be inferred from his myths, language, practices and beliefs of recent times. These, in later centuries, have been recorded more or less accurately and completely by both Indians and Whites. In the second quarter of the sixteenth century Jacques Cartier, in the memoir of his explorations, described a visit to an Indian community that probably was Iroquoian. Almost three-quarters of a century

later Champlain recorded contact with the Iroquois. The latter's contemporary, the lawyer Lescarbot, published a history in three volumes that presented the information then current concerning New France and included several scores of pages relating to the Iroquois and kindred tribes. A generation later the cleric Sagard likewise published a history of French America, the dominant theme of which was missionary work since 1615. In Sagard's time a Dutch lawyer, Van der Donck, visited the New Netherland and wrote a description of it. Unfortunately his descriptions of the Indians in Dutch America were the least valuable portions of his book. Another generation elapsed before a European again recorded contact with the Iroquois. A settler in the middle colonies, Greenhalgh by name, visited the Iroquois country and wrote a brief description of the Iroquois village, population and house. His few pages of observations in 1677 have proved to be the most authentic of any yet referred to. At the close of the century two Frenchmen visited Canada. The first to arrive was a young Baron, La Hontan, who became an officer in the French colonial army in 1683 and remained in the country for ten years. His lengthy account of the new world included important references to Iroquois customs and characteristics which, however, have been accepted cautiously because of the young soldier's exuberant imagination. His fellow-countryman Bacqueville de La Potherie arrived about three years after La Hontan had returned to France, and made a voyage southward along the eastern coast. His visit resulted in a history of North America in four volumes, the third of which dealt with the Iroquois.

The written evidence contributed in the eighteenth century had at least twice the volume of that of the preceding two centuries and was more definite and trustworthy. In the summer of 1720 the Jesuit Charlevoix arrived in America and began a series of letters about his voyage to North America that has been of great value to the student of Iroquois life. Later he got out a history of New France based mainly upon the reports made by the Jesuit missionaries. At the time that Charlevoix was writing his letters another French churchman, Lafitau, was collecting information, largely from Jesuit sources, concerning North American Indians. His two large,



illustrated volumes together with Charlevoix's letters about his voyage to North America and the voluminous relations or reports of the Jesuit missionaries themselves, were the best works dealing with the Iroquois that appeared during the century. In the British colonies men were becoming interested in gathering information about the Indians, and a number of accounts survive that deal with the Iroquois. In that third decade in which Lafitau and Charlevoix wrote, an Englishman of the colony of New York, Colden by name, who had the benefit of close contact with the Iroquois, published a history chiefly of their relations with Europeans. The second volume contained the transactions that took place at many councils and shed considerable light upon Iroquois customs. A generation slipped by before another Englishman visited the Iroquois and wrote an account of what he saw. The famous John Bartram visited them almost seventy years later than Greenhalgh and supplemented the latter's description of Iroquois villages by reliable notes on the same subject. After the close of the Revolutionary War there appeared a history of the mission of the United Brethren among the North American Indians, written by the missionary Loskiel and containing first hand and reliable information about the life and the habits of the Indians of the middle colonies. Working in the same field at the same time was the missionary Heckewelder. Following the close of the French and Indian War he spent half a century among the Indians and then wrote an account of the Indian Nations that has fine descriptions of customs and characteristics, including those of the Iroquois.

The written evidence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries concerning the Iroquois was not only scant but usually appeared at intervals of a generation or more. This unfortunate condition would have been true in large measure for the eighteenth century were it not for two great collections that span the intervals. The first of these, the eighteen volumes of documents relating to New York colonial and state history, appeared as two separate works about the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of the documents dealt with the relations of the Iroquois and the colonists and contained little of value to a student of religion and morals. From time to time, however, appears a document bearing upon a council, some

social custom, agricultural methods, or the Indian attitude toward drunkenness, that repays the tedious search through the many hundreds of pages. The other collection has been referred to several times. The Jesuit Fathers were in contact with the Iroquois from about 1640 almost to the French and Indian War. These patient and long-suffering men left behind them a record, in their humble reports of labors in eastern Canada and the land to the south, that is second to none yet mentioned.

From the time that Heckewelder terminated his missionary work until there appeared the next record of an observer among the Iroquois, a half century elapsed. Then followed a different type of investigation and a different type of worker. The missionary gave way to the trained ethnologist, and the latter's reports superseded those of the former. One of the earliest of such reports was by Schoolcraft who published some notes on the Iroquois in 1846. These notes, not infrequently unreliable, marked the beginning of two decades of activity among students of the Iroquois. In 1849 J. V. H. Clark got out two volumes on the Iroquois entitled "Onondaga," the first of which contained many accounts of what he saw among them. Two years later appeared Morgan's "League of the Iroquois," the classic on the subject. A trained and enthusiastic ethnologist, he studied Iroquois life in his day and wrote an account of it that is indispensable. Although his enthusiasm often carried him away, his statement of what he himself saw and heard is highly reliable. At the same time there appeared Seaver's biography of an adopted Iroquois, Mary Jemison, which shed much light upon Iroquois customs about 1850. Just after the close of the Civil War W. L. Stone published fine biographies of two eminent Iroquois, Joseph Brant and Red Jacket. Two years later Brinton published some New World Myths that included some of the myths of the Iroquois.

Another barren decade then passed. It was the last interruption in the stream of evidence. The year 1880 inaugurated activity among students of the Iroquois that has gone on ever since. The Bureau of Ethnology has promoted interest, and almost a score of trained investigators have written on the Iroquois. Among the older writers must be mentioned Hale,

whose invaluable "Iroquois Book of Rites" appeared in 1883. Since that ninth decade J. N. B. Hewitt has contributed many important articles dealing with various phases of Iroquois life. His studies of the social and political aspects of the League of the Iroquois have been especially valuable. Shortly after Hewitt's first articles appeared, Arthur C. Parker, himself an Iroquois, began to publish studies of a variety of Iroquois activities so authoritative in character as to place him in the foremost rank of the students of that people. For more than a score of years both Hewitt and Parker have been gathering an extensive mass of material concerning them, a great part of which still awaits publication. These writers of the last generation or more have recorded the myths, beliefs, institutions and other elements, that made up the life of the Iroquois of the nineteenth century, on the whole with such accuracy and completeness that they furnish a body of information far superior to any that preceded.

#### MAIN FEATURES OF IROQUOIS LIFE.

The Dutch and the French found five tribes of Iroquois settled in villages in what is now New York State. About Lake Onondaga were the members of the central tribe, the Onondagas; to the west of them were the Cayugas while to the east were the Oneidas; in the region below Lake Ontario and east of Lake Erie were the Senecas; west of the Hudson and Lake Champlain were the Mohawks. Later, in 1715, the Tuscaroras settled on Oneida territory.<sup>14</sup> The land of the Iro-

<sup>14</sup> The movements of the Iroquois before the seventeenth century are not known accurately. The following give a fairly complete discussion of the matter:

#### EARLY EXPLORERS AND WRITERS.

Baxter: *Memoirs of Jacques Cartier*, 160-172.

Lafitau: *Moeurs des sauvages*, I, 101-102.

Charlevoix: *History . . . of New France*, II, 72-73.

*Voyage to North America*, I, 167-171.

#### LATER WRITERS.

Beauchamp: "Origin . . . of the N. Y. Iroquois," in *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, VIII, 358-366; IX, 37-39; XVI, 61-69.

Converse: *Myths . . . of the . . . Iroquois*, 128.

Douglas: "Consolidation of the Iroquoian Confederacy," in *Am. Geog. Soc. Jour.*, XXIX, 41-54.

quois was marked off rather definitely by the eastern Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River in the west and north, and by the rivers, lakes and hills in eastern New York. To a people capable of them this region favored intercourse, friendship and union, since a string of streams and lakes connected the east with the west and obstacles to travel were few. The country was a forest region, abundantly watered, fertile and well supplied with the animal and vegetable life of a temperate clime. The woods offered bear, deer and squirrel, and nuts, fruits and edible roots; the streams were filled with fish; the open spaces by their fertility made maize culture simple. The home country, then, furnished a goodly measure of protection against possible invaders, favored intercommunication and therefore union among the neighbors within it and offered fair reward to savage labor.<sup>15</sup>

The Iroquois were a people who could and did use these natural advantages. The men trapped and hunted and fished; the women—the very children, too—kept house, gathered nuts, grubbed roots and, most important of all, raised maize, beans, squashes, melons, pumpkins, fruits, tobacco and sunflowers for oil.<sup>16</sup> Our common notions of savage life are embarrassed and disconcerted by the amount of extensive farming these “mere savages” did. The Senecas cultivated fields in the Genesee Valley for miles of its length. General Sullivan described the

Hale: “Fall of Hochelaga,” in *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, VII, 1-14.

*Iroquois Book of Rites*, 19 and Appendix, note c.

Hewitt: “Formation of . . . League of the Iroquois,” in *Am. Anthr.*, VII, 61-67. In Hodge’s *Handbook*, I, 615-616, 618.

Morgan: *League of the Iroquois*, II (notes 16-21), 187-192.

Parker: “Origin of the Iroquois,” in *Am. Anthr.*, n. s. XVIII (1916), 479-483, 503-507.

Stites: *Economics of the Iroquois*, 13-14.

Stone: *Red Jacket*, 106-112, 116-119.

#### MYTHS.

Cusick: . . . *History of the Six Nations*, 11-14, 53-59.

Schoolcraft: *Notes on the Iroquois*, chs. II, III.

<sup>15</sup> Good descriptions will be found in: Charlevoix: *History*, II, 188-192. *Jesuit Relations*, XLIII (1656-1657), ch. XI. Van der Donck: *Description of the New Netherland*, 135-189.

More recent accounts are given by: Morgan, u. s., I, ch. 2. Stites, u. s., Pt. I, ch. I.

<sup>16</sup> Parker: *Iroquois Uses of Maize*, 19-20. Stites, 15-19.



town of Genesee in Revolutionary days as one containing one hundred and twenty-eight houses, mostly large and elegant, well located and "almost encircled with clear flat land extending a number of miles; over which extensive fields of corn were waving, together with every kind of vegetable . . ." <sup>17</sup> The hunting season was the winter, the hunting preserve the land from Maryland north and Ohio east. Fishing time followed that of hunting and extended into the summer. Each of the other occupations—berry picking, planting, harvesting, nut gathering, etc.—was pursued in its season. The heavy work such as a big harvest, the felling of trees, the clearing of sites, the building of houses, fell to the men. They, too, usually made the tools of production. The actual planting and caring for grain and vegetables were done by groups of women. A matron was chosen to act as overseer, and the whole party planted, cultivated and harvested under her direction. The fact that women farmed in groups was not a peculiarity, for hunters and fishermen likewise worked in parties. Because they knew only extensive agriculture soil exhaustion occurred about every twelve years. This fact, in addition to the high total consumption of accessible wood fuel in the same time, necessitated a migration and the raising of a new village. <sup>18</sup>

Although it has varied from time to time, the total Iroquois population has been and is about fifteen thousand, of which the

<sup>17</sup> Quoted by Parker, loc. cit., 20.

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, II (notes 88-93), 251-253.

Parker: loc. cit., 21-36 passim, gives a full discussion of agriculture and includes photographs. Compare what he says with Mrs. Jemison's account of her work, given in Seaver: *Mary Jemison*, 69-73.

Stites, Pt. I, chs. II, III.

Older writers discussed the subject:

Bacqueville de La Potherie: *Histoire*, III, 18-20.

Heckewelder: *History . . . of the Indian Nations*, ch. XVI.

Charlevoix: *Voyage to N. A.*, II, 91-94.

Loskiel: *History of the Mission . . . among the Indians*, Pt. I, chs. VI, VII.

Lafitau: *Moeurs*, II, 75-81, 86, 107-112, 336-338.

On food, utensils of all sorts, division of labor among the Hurons, who were so closely related to the Iroquois, see

Parkman: *Jesuits in North America*, I, 16-18, 22-23. (Copy used is vol. III of the Champlain Edition of Parkman's works, published in Boston in 1897.)

Senecas had and have a plurality.<sup>19</sup> This population was gathered together in two or three dozen villages, each containing a few hundred persons. A village was simply a number of houses close enough together to form a neighborhood, for there were no streets, no roads and no orderly arrangement of dwellings. In each house there lived from a half dozen to over a dozen families in our sense of the term. The house itself was an oblong, bark dwelling with a door at each end, a series of open, single "rooms" or sections along both sides of the building, and a line of fire places down the center, each fire serving the families in the two sections flanking it.<sup>20</sup>

The maternal family was the smallest political and social unit. Such a family included a woman, her sons and daughters, the sons and daughters of her daughters, and so on. When a household became large, one or more of the younger couples would go off and, with the aid of their relatives, would build a house for themselves. Such houses usually were small at first but grew and in time became real long-houses. Descent was matrilinear and relationships were matronymic. Governance was matripotestal; but final authority rested in the brothers and uncles of the women of the household, one of these men being selected by the women to represent the house in relations between it and outsiders.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Morgan, II (notes 59-60), 226-230, gives a fairly complete discussion.

Goldenweiser, in *Geol. Sur. of Canada, Rep. Anthr. Div.*, Sessional Paper no. 26 (1913), p. 370, conjectures that in the seventeenth century there were nearly forty clans in the League and that each clan contained about 375 persons, these being gathered into from two to five maternal families.

<sup>20</sup> Descriptions of houses are given by

Bartram: *Observations* . . . , 40-41.

Greenhalgh: *Observations* . . . , being pp. 11-14 of vol. I of the *Documentary Hist. of N. Y.*

Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 96-98.

Lafitau, II, 9-16.

Morgan: *House and House-Life* . . . , 119-125, with pictures and a diagram.

A summary and discussion, together with diagrams, of the long house are given by Lloyd in Morgan: *League*, II (notes 124-126), 287-302.

Parkman, u. s., I, 11-14, note 2 p. 12, note 1 p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Goldenweiser, u. s., Rep. for 1912, 467-468, 471. Hewitt, in the *Handbook*, 1, 617, 303.

The social and political unit next above the maternal family was the clan. In any tribe a clan consisted of one or more maternal families. These clan members felt themselves to be related, although the relationship was not always clear. A clan did not live off by itself, for in almost any village could be found maternal families of different clans. In by-gone days the total number of clans may have been close to forty. The names, however, were about eight, to wit, Bear, Wolf, Turtle, Beaver, Snipe, Deer, Hawk and Heron. The Mohawk and Oneida tribes seem never to have had more than three of these clans, Bear, Wolf and Turtle, but all eight clan names could be found in each of the other four tribes. Each clan of a tribe, however, maintained its own unity, had its own sets of individual names, elected its own chief or chiefs to the Confederation when such was its privilege, and chose its own ceremonial officials. All clans had the right to adopt outsiders. The clan, too, appears formerly to have had rights to a portion of the tribal property (see below, p. 81) and to have had its own burial grounds. Clansmen were expected to protect and to avenge one another. For the last two hundred years, more or less, the clans have been the exogamous units, the interdict extending throughout the Confederacy so that, for example, not only may a Seneca warrior of the clan of the Bear not marry another Seneca Bear, but no woman of the Bear Clan in any tribe of the League can become his wife. When a husband had become a father he left the dwelling of his mother and joined that of his wife, although occasionally the wife became a member of her husband's house.<sup>22</sup> Other features of clan

<sup>22</sup> Discussion of political and social organization of the Iroquois has gone on for two centuries.

Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 36, on exogamy; 16-23 on political organization.

Lafitau has a long discussion of the subject, I, 463-580; particularly 463-465, 469-486, 552-553, 556, 558, 564-565.

Loskiel, Pt. I, 56, on exogamy; 137-140 on political organization.

Morgan: *House and House-Life*, passim, *League*, II (notes 54-58), 217-226. Lloyd's descriptions should be compared with the more authoritative accounts given by Goldenweiser and Hewitt which are noted below.

Parkman, I, 46-54 on political organization; 38-41 on social life.

Beauchamp: *Civil, Religious and Mourning Councils* . . . , passim.

Chadwick: *The People of the Long House*, passim.



organization, such as the relation to the totem and the participation in Confederate affairs, will be discussed later (see Chapter IV).

The clans of every tribe were grouped into two divisions or sides or phratries. The Iroquois had no distinctive names for these divisions. The clans of one side called one another brothers; they called those of the other side cousins. The phratries functioned mainly at social and religious ceremonies. The great games were played between the divisions, and affairs were conducted according to membership in the sides at burials, at the great religious festivals, at the election of chiefs, and so on. But at political councils phratric arrangements were not observed.<sup>23</sup>

The social and political unit next above the phratry was the tribe. As already mentioned, the clans were grouped into six tribes, each of which, except the Mohawk and the Oneida, contained eight or more clans. The members of the tribe felt themselves to be one, since they had a common tradition, a common land to use and to defend, a common speech and participation in the great tribal religious ceremonies and feasts as well as in the tribal councils relating to religious, military or other weighty matters.<sup>24</sup> Even the women were interested directly in these councils, for they took part in some and in others could voice their opinions through some orator from among the men, whom they chose as their mouth-piece.<sup>25</sup>

In the later fifteenth century, probably, the five tribes in the New York region united into what was at first a loose confederacy, but one which gradually became more closely knit and strengthened. The purposes of the League, as re-

Goldenweiser, Reps. for 1912, 1913, passim.

Hewitt, in *Handbook*, I, 303-306, 618.

Also references in note 3 of Ch. IV below, p. 76.

The most recent discussion of conciliar ceremonial has been by C. M. Barbeau: "Iroquois Clans and Phratries," *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., XIX (1917), 392-402 and Goldenweiser's comment, *ib.*, n. s., XX (1918), 118-120.

<sup>23</sup> Goldenweiser: *Geol. Sur.*, Rep. for 1912, 464-466. Hewitt, u. s., I, 304. Barbeau, loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Hewitt, loc. cit., II, 814.

<sup>25</sup> Stone: *Red Jacket*, 139-143, 155-158, gives some illustrations of this usage. Women did speak unofficially, however. Cf. Goldenweiser, u. s., Rep. for 1912, 469.

vealed in the Deganawida Myth, were to secure public peace by providing a means for eliminating inter-tribal quarrels, to provide more effective force against foreign enemies and to promote the welfare of all through the authority and justice of law and the supporting arm of the whole body of warriors. The fifty chiefs who composed the Council of the League were chosen by the women of the tribe and clan to whom that right had been given and in the manner designated by the founders of the League.<sup>26</sup>

An Iroquois, then, had a strong tie of kin to bind him to his household, clan and phratry. To his tribe he was bound by the bond of kin and by the bond of a common land, speech and council. The League had as unifying bonds the kin tie, since roughly speaking the clan systems were in all tribes, a common language, a common country to defend and a federal council. Morgan sums up the situation, although incompletely, by saying that "The life of the Iroquois was either spent in the chase, on the war-path, or at the council-fire. They formed the three leading objects of his existence."<sup>27</sup>

Other interests were mirrored in appropriate institutions.<sup>28</sup> The details of the education of the young will be discussed later (see p. 83); here it will suffice to say that education was strictly familiar, the mother teaching the child until puberty, at which

<sup>26</sup> The Deganawida Myth and conciliar ceremonial will be discussed in Ch. IV, p. 75 sq. See note 3, p. 76.

Beauchamp: *Iroquois Trail*, 11-38, 56-104 passim, 137-143. In *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 201-203; IV, 295-306.

Brant-Sero: "Dekanawideh," in *Man*, 1901, 166-170.

Clark: *Onondaga*, I, 21-30, 38-43.

Canfield: *Legends*, 23-40, 137-148 and Cornplanter's comment, 208.

Hale: *Book of Rites*, ch. II.

Hewitt: "Legend of the Founding of the League," *Am. Anthr.*, V, 131-148. In *Handbook*, II, 815.

For the actual formation of the League see note 14 above. Some instances attesting the weakness of conciliar control, whether federal or tribal, and the looseness of the Confederation in the seventeenth century, are to be found in XLIII *Jes. Rel.* (1656-7), 101, 103, 115, 137, 215. Sara Stites is of the opinion that sufficient consideration hitherto has not been given to the economic influences underlying the political tribe, clan, etc. Cf. Stites, 96-120.

<sup>27</sup> I, 102.

<sup>28</sup> Parkman, I, introduction pp. 3-87, gives an easily accessible summary of Indian life in the central East.

time, if the child was a boy, the father took charge and taught his son to hunt and to fight. The Iroquois religion, as shall be seen, did not unaided transcend Iroquois social conditions. Because much of an Iroquois's life was bound up with his economic and his protective activities, his gods were those of war, of the chase and of agriculture. Finally, his morals were those of a group that was small and was bound by kin ties. His ethics had a division. One line of conduct was to be pursued with regard to those within the group, and another was to be pursued with regard to those without the group.

## CHAPTER II

### IROQUOIS RELIGION.

(CHIEFLY IN AND BEFORE THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND UNAFFECTED BY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES.)

#### DEFINITION AND REMARKS.

SOME phenomena the Iroquois thought he understood, for he had what were to him rational explanations of them.<sup>1</sup> But other phenomena were far from being matter of fact. He was thrilled by them and imbued with a sense of the presence of the mysterious; he was impelled to get into right relations with the uncanny power that was making itself manifest.<sup>2</sup> Not only did his religion involve the emotional reactions, the beliefs and the practices that were connected with the mysterious and the uncanny but, by its very nature, the religious attitude emphasized the importance of things religious and of all that became associated therewith. Religion was an evaluating agency superior to any other possessed by the Iroquois, and as such it can not be divorced from their morals.

Knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of the Iroquois in and before the eighteenth century is largely inferential. They themselves kept no record of their society, its composition, constitution and history, other than in such stories, fables, myths, oral traditions and conduct as have survived time. Many of these, so long preserved in the memory, have been recorded since the middle of the nineteenth century, after having been subjected for more than two centuries to White influences. Having passed by word of mouth through so many minds and so many years, they not infrequently have become contradictory, inconsistent and confused. There is very little in the documentary sources that did not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Converse, 118-124.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the *Handbook*, II, 365. Paul Radin's notable article on the "Religion of the North American Indians," in *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, XXVII (1914), 335-373.

pass through the mind of a white man in being recorded. Many records are not only not over a century old, but many of them were put together in a haphazard manner, being more like diaries of interesting things than records of scientific investigations and therefore lacking a much desired completeness. Moreover, the Iroquois did not wish lightly to present his sacred, precious beliefs and practices, the things of his very self in his sublimest moments, to the view of outsiders who might scoff and make sport.<sup>3</sup> It was given to few to learn of the inner Iroquois life. One is compelled to believe, therefore, that changes now unknown have taken place in Iroquois religion before the nineteenth century, and that a satisfying determination of their religious worship before that century is impossible because it can not be complete.

#### IROQUOIS VIEW OF THE WORLD.

The study of these traditions, practices and other records impresses upon the modern investigator how wide apart are his outlook upon life and the cultural outlook of the Iroquois. This difference is exhibited strikingly by the Iroquois notions concerning the earth and nature. From the myths one gathers that to the Iroquois the earth was merely several days' journey in extent from his home as center. It was flat and was covered by the sky and its contents which touched the earth in east and west.<sup>4</sup> In this very circumscribed cosmos nearly all phenomena had life and were interpreted usually in terms of personality rather than in terms of mere physical causes. Life was a property not alone of animate objects but of inanimate objects and other phenomena such as rocks, plants, water, tides, stars, the dawn, thunder storms, and so on. Possessing life, they had desires and wishes and effectuated them by means of their subtle power. In this connection Hewitt has asserted that Iroquois speculation upon such emotion-stirring phenomena as storm and tempest, life and death, crisis and risk, led to the vague notion of a mystic potency in things, a potency

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Converse, 10. Canfield: *Legends*, 20, tells how Cornplanter respected and venerated the hoary legends of his great ancestors.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Schoolcraft: *Myth of Hiawatha*, 251-261, 278-292.

Hewitt: "Raising and Falling of the Sky in Iroquois Legends," *Am. Anthr.*, V, 344.



not understood but which could be recognized when it manifested itself in some strange way. This impersonal power was called orenda. The exercise of orenda, called otgon if evil resulted to man, was a distinguishing characteristic of the world of spirits.<sup>5</sup> Trained investigators have reconstructed the conception of orenda by linguistic analysis. Hewitt perhaps has done most in analyzing this concept which is not peculiar to the Iroquois but is similar to those found under different names among other savage peoples in America and elsewhere. Among the Iroquois known to history the notion always has been vague and elusive. In analyzing it as mirrored in their language the constant danger has been that meanings unthought of by the people may be attributed to them. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that some notion of orenda was held by the Iroquois when history first recorded contact with them, and that the manifestation of orenda was common in the large world of spirits.

#### THE SPIRIT WORLD.

What spirits or deities received worship in some manner from the Iroquois before the European occupation of America is not completely determinable. It is certain that before the Whites came the Iroquois had a host of deities and other spirits and had associated religious beliefs and practices with them. Some of these spirits were more powerful than others, some were more important than others, none was all important or all powerful, all were distinguished by the exercise of power in ways more efficacious than man could exercise it and all were potentially harmful or helpful to man. Some of the deities were distinctly supernatural in our sense of the term, but most of them were partly supernatural and partly non-natural or non-human personalities like the pygmies or the "little people."

A relatively late creation myth introduces many of the greater deities known to the Iroquois before the seventeenth century. To Iroquois thought the creation out of nothing of

<sup>5</sup> Hewitt in *Handbook*, II, 147-148; also his more thorough article, "Orenda and a Definition of Religion," in *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., IV, 33-46. Paul Radin, u. s., takes marked exception to the acceptance of the mana notions. Cf. Goldenweiser's comment upon Radin in *Jour. Phil., Psych. and Sci. Methods*, XII, no. 23, (Nov. 11, 1915), 634-636.



the earth and all that is therein was unknown. Beings existed in the sky before the earth was made. A sea with aquatic animals and with an earthy bottom lay below. The beings at that time lived in villages under head men<sup>6</sup> as later did the Indians on earth. † The earth itself, according to the numerous and varying creation legends, was formed at a time when some trouble, brewing in a chief's household in the sky, resulted in the forcible exile of his wife. He became jealous. Wrongfully accusing her of wilful faithlessness he cunningly deceived her and pushed or kicked her through a hole made in the sky. Luckily the animals in the sea below saw the fall of the unfortunate woman-being and prepared to catch her. Earth was fetched from the bottom of the sea and was placed upon the turtle's broad and sturdy back, after a council—this is characteristically Indian—had determined upon that line of action. To this spot she was lowered gently by birds, and here she gave birth to two sons, some say to a daughter who bore the two sons. Meanwhile the earth on the turtle's back expanded and grew and became the Earth. The two lads grew and made the things on Earth, but they did not make all things for beings such as the gods of winds and of storms already existed.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is significant that, with one exception, the Iroquois tales and myths speak only of headmen and villages. The Deganawida Myth is the only one that refers to the League and to intricate political and social organization.

<sup>7</sup> There are many versions of the Creation Myth. The best accounts are the Onondaga, Seneca and Mohawk versions given in translation by Hewitt in *Bur. Ethn. Rep.*, XXI, 133-339. His translation is accompanied by the original and an interlinear translation of it. Other accounts may be found in

Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 103, 109.

Sagard: *Histoire du Canada*, I, 451-452.

X *Jes. Rel.* (1636), 127-139, giving the Huron version.

Hewitt: "Cosmogonic Gods of the Iroquois," *Amer. Ass. Adv. Sci., Proc.*,

XLIV, 241-250, giving an analysis of the beings named in the myth and of their relation to natural phenomena.

Schoolcraft: *Notes on the Iroquois*, 36-37.

Hale: "Creation Myth," *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 177-183.

Cusick, in Beauchamp's *Iroquois Trail*, 1-5.

Converse, 31-38.

Cf. C. M. Barbeau: *Huron and Wyandot Mythology*, Canada Geol. Survey, Memoir 80 (Ottawa, 1915). Very suggestive. For creation myths similar to those of the Iroquois, v. 37 sq.

She who was kicked out of the sky was Atahentsic. Her final dwelling place was in the West, where she ruled over evil spirits and over such spirits of the dead as had the misfortune to wander into her realms. Her "representative," or her daughter's in those myths that credited her with one, was the moon. Her husband, under different names, appeared in some accounts as her son or grandson. Both he and she mayhap were previously Huron. As Tarenyawagon he was very important, being the "Holder of the Heavens," firm friend of the Iroquois and sender of dreams. Myth says that it was he who led the Iroquois tribes to New York, gave each its seat there and taught the members of each to farm, to procure meat and to live together. As Jouskeha he also ruled the realm of spirits in the West, but his was the realm where souls were happy. It is said he dwelt there with Atahentsic. His "representative" was the sun. As ~~Agreskoue he was the god chiefly~~ of war. Our recognition of the same deity under different names was not, so far as can be determined, Iroquoian. To an Iroquois each name denoted a different deity.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hewitt, u. s., concludes that Tarenyawagon can not be identified with the Huron Jouskeha, that Atahentsic could not have become the moon, and that Jouskeha should not be identified with the sun. Cf. pp. 243, 245, 246. Hewitt agrees largely with Brinton's conclusions in *Hero Myths*, 53-62. Both affirm, on the basis of linguistic analysis, that Jouskeha and Atahentsic dwelt in the East, and both identify Jouskeha with the dawn and Atahentsic with the waters. Brinton endeavors to show how Jouskeha and Tarenyawagon became confused. Cf. Barbeau, 288 sq. For further discussion of Jouskeha, Atahentsic and Tarenyawagon see

Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 108, 109, 172. P. 117 describes the western realm of Atahentsic and Jouskeha.

Lafitau, I, 133-135, showing the identification of the deities one with another. P. 244 discusses Atahentsic.

Brinton: *Myths of the New World*, 169-172.

Jouskeha as sun and Atahentsic as moon are set forth, for the Hurons, in X *J. R.* (1636), 133 sq. Cf. VIII *J. R.* (1635), 117-119. XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 197, deals with Tarenyawagon as Dwarf, as Holder of the Heavens and Guardian of the Iroquois.

Sagard, I, ch. XXX, differs from other writers in some details. He wrote of the Hurons.

Hale: *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 177-183, gives a Huron creation myth as related about a generation ago.

Hale: *Book of Rites*, 74.

Cusick, in *Iroquois Trail*, 11-14.

Not so exalted as Tarenyawagon and Agreskoue but of prime importance was the lovable old man, our grandfather Heno, god of storms, sender of the beneficent rain, solicitous caretaker of plants and terrible scourge of evil doers.<sup>9</sup> The kindly and powerful but touchy Spirit of Winds was Gaoh, who never left his western home in the sky and whose moods were mirrored in the blasts of hurricanes and in the zephyrs of spring-time.<sup>10</sup>

Of these gods three at least were worshiped long ago in definite ceremonies. Tarenyawagon, though venerated, appeared under that name in but one ceremonial feast, that of the White Dog, an innovation hardly antedating the seventeenth century (see below, pp. 56, 69-70). The sacrifice of the White Dog became a part of the older Feast of Dreams in which Tarenyawagon functioned as Master of Their Lives and which will be described below in connection with dreams. This important feast was the one regularly recurring religious ceremony performed before the nineteenth century. The time for observing other formal celebrations depended upon special conditions such as war, a bad hunting season, drought, and the like.

Agreskoue attracted much attention. Charlevoix says of him that he was "their chief God; or as they express it, the Great Spirit, the Creator and Master of the World, the Genius who governs every Thing: But it is chiefly for military Expeditions that they invoke him; . . . His Name is the War-Cry before the Battle, and in the Height of the Engagement."<sup>11</sup>

Beauchamp, in *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, XIV, 345-346.

Converse, 33-34.

Hewitt, in *Bur. Ethn. Rep.*, XXI, 183, 185 (Onondaga); 228, 230-231 (Seneca); 290, 292-293 (Mohawk).

For Agreskoue see notes 11-14 of this chapter. As regards Huron influences see note 14 of ch. I above. Also

Charlevoix: *History*, II, 72-73.

Donohoe: *Iroquois and the Jesuits*, 51, 56.

XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 119.

<sup>9</sup> Hewitt, u. s., 336-339.

Mrs. Smith: *Myths of the Iroquois*, *Bur. Ethn. Rep.* II, 52, 54-55.

Converse, 39-42.

Morgan: *League*, I, 149-151.

<sup>10</sup> Converse, 36-38. Morgan, I, 151-152.

<sup>11</sup> *Voyage*, I, 177.

How much is known of all their practices connected with him is an open question. But it is certain that Agreskoue at times exacted sacrifices from his people. Father Jogues was familiar with such ceremonies and relates that

"They have recourse in their necessities to a demon whom they call Aireskoi, to whom they offer, as it were, the first fruits of everything. When, for instance, a Stag has been taken, they call the eldest of the hut or of the Village, to the end that he may bless it or sacrifice it. This man, standing opposite the one who holds some of the flesh, says with a loud voice: 'Oh, Demon Aireskui, we offer thee this flesh, and prepare for thee a feast with it, that thou mayst eat of it, and show us where are the stags, and send them into our snares,—or, at least, that we may see them again in the winter,' etc.; or, in sickness, 'to the end that we may recover health.' They do the same in fishing, war, etc."<sup>12</sup>

In this connection the Jesuits mention several times the religious duty of eating captives and say that the practice was customary.<sup>13</sup> Father Jogues speaks of anthropophagy as being not uncommon. He tells that during the winter, at a solemn feast that the Iroquois had made of two bears which they had offered to Agreskoue, they had expressed this prayer: "Aireskoi, thou dost right to punish us, and to give us no more captives, because we have sinned by not eating the bodies of those whom thou last gavest us; but we promise thee to eat the first ones whom thou shalt give us, as we now do with these two Bears." And, says he, they kept their promise. Of some female captives he relates that

"They brought three women from the same nation, with their little children, and received them naked, with heavy blows of sticks; they cut off their fingers, and, after having roasted one of them over her entire body, they threw her, still alive, into a great fire, to make her die therein,—an act uncommon, even there (that is, the burning of women was uncommon). And, as often as they applied the fire to that unhappy one with torches and burning brands, an Old man cried in a loud voice: 'Aireskoi, we sacrifice to thee this victim, that thou mayst satisfy thyself with her flesh, and give us victory over our enemies.' The pieces of this corpse were sent to the other Villages, there to be eaten."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> XXXIX *J. R.* (1653), 207-209.

<sup>13</sup> XL *J. R.* (1653-1654), 169; XLI *J. R.* (1653-1654), 53; note 14 below. Yet Hale: *Rites*, 97, says, "The Iroquois never burnt women at the stake."

<sup>14</sup> XXXIX *J. R.* (1653), 219-221.



Moreover, such eating of victims may have been more than propitiatory, for it seems to have been believed that the partaking of strange food or of food under strange circumstances gave the eater a mystic power which insured success in hunting the living members of the victim's species. A hunter relates that at his initiation upon entering manhood he encountered a spirit that offered him a bit of human flesh. He was so horrified that he rejected it. The spirit then gave him some bear meat to eat and he became a mighty hunter. "He attributes this excellent fortune that he has always had in the chase, to the piece of bear's fat that the Demon made him eat; and he judges from this that he would have had equal success in war, had he eaten the piece of human flesh that he refused."<sup>15</sup>

Heno as the nurturer of plants was asked at planting time to send the welcome rains for the aid of the seedlings, and he was "thanked" for his services at harvest time. During droughts Heno was appealed to and tobacco, the usual offering of the Iroquois, was burned to induce rain.<sup>16</sup>

Religious dances played an important part in the great festivals of the nineteenth century. Such dances were not of recent invention, but so few are the remarks of observers before that time concerning the dance that a discussion of this mode of worship is best undertaken in connection with the religious ceremonies of more recent times (see below, p. 66).

The Iroquois recognized no hierarchy in the spirit world, although some spirits were regarded as lower than others. Such spirits were nearer man and usually were concerned more directly with human affairs. In general, these spirits were most active in the summer season and hibernated during the winter.<sup>17</sup> These less exalted spirits round about man filled leading parts in tale and myth. Some of them were aids to the greater spirits. Notable among them were the Thunderers, who assisted Heno in his work of providing the beneficent water for growth and in his opposition to evil. These warrior-like individuals were dreaded particularly by the evil serpents that recognized in the Thunderers their sworn, implacable

<sup>15</sup> XXIII *J. R.* (1642), 157-159.

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, I, 155, 194. Cf. Boyle in *Jour. Anthr. Inst.*, XXX (or n. s., III), 268. Mrs. Smith, n. s., 72-73. Note 9 above.

<sup>17</sup> Morgan, II, 255. Cf. p. 78 below and note 14 of Ch. IV.

enemies.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the Spirit of Winds had his assistants, for the four winds—the Bear or North Wind, the Panther or West Wind, the Moose or East Wind and the Fawn or South Wind—were subject to Gaoh. He it was who released them to lead their winds up and down the earth.<sup>19</sup> Tarenyawagon as Sender of Dreams communicated his wishes to the dreamer through his messenger, Aikon. Because of missionary teaching Aikon appears not to have survived the eighteenth century (see below, pp. 56, 69).

Lesser spirits did not always have specific names. The name *oki*,<sup>20</sup> or *manitou*, often was applied to them on the whole with the same vague meaning as our word *spirits*. The name also was used in a restricted sense to denote the guardian spirits of men and of women and as such will appear in the discussion of dreams. The minor spirits were those that guarded plant life in all its forms and that dwelt in all plants, and were those of dangerous, strange, awe-inspiring places and things<sup>21</sup> such as water-falls and cataracts, cliffs and deep ravines, peculiar rocks and fire, medicines and the seasons and the stars.<sup>22</sup> Day and night were incarnate. Winter, an old man, was melted or driven away each spring by the youthful male or female Spirit of Spring.<sup>23</sup> Such spirits were spoken

<sup>18</sup> Converse, 41, 42-45.

Mrs. Smith, 55-58.

Beauchamp: *Iroquois Trail*, 50-53.

Lafitau, I, 253, on the horror of snakes.

<sup>19</sup> Converse, 36-38.

<sup>20</sup> Parkman, u. s., I, 75. Cf. Barbeau, u. s., 333.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Lafitau, I, 145-146.

<sup>22</sup> The legends best set forth the spirit world, hence one should consult particularly Mrs. Converse, Mrs. Smith, Cusick and Canfield. Canfield, 186, has a fine photograph of the Oneida Stone. The Journals have some additional material. Consult the bibliography under the names, Beauchamp, Brant-Sero, Hagar, Hale, Hewitt, Parker. Barbeau gives many myths similar to those of the Iroquois. Besides those mentioned above he records myths dealing with Heno (51, 322, 330) and the *oki* (333). His introduction is excellent. A variety of tales are to be found in Schoolcraft's *Notes* and in his *Myth of Hiawatha*, and in Johnson's *Legends, Traditions and Laws of the Iroquois*.

<sup>23</sup> Hewitt, in *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., IV, 33.

Converse, 45, 51, 66, 96-107, etc.

Morgan, I, 193-194, 211.

XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 123-125; XLIV *J. R.* (1656-1658), 25; LI *J. R.* (1667-1668), 181-183; LVII *J. R.* (1672-1673), 147-149.



of frequently as the Invisible Aids.<sup>24</sup> Three of them came to be selected for particular attention. The spirits of the Corn, Bean and Squash became especially important because they nurtured and cared for these most important of all the Iroquois agricultural products. They were called the Three Sisters for they were known to be inseparable, and the Iroquois planted corn, beans and squash together.<sup>25</sup> It has been stated that things of nature were thought to act in ways analogous to human ways since they were personalized. They might, therefore, and often did have desires ruinous to human welfare. For instance, the notorious Flying-Heads loved human flesh. Such spirits were not averse to using human aid, witches, in order to accomplish their purposes. Serpents were the sign of evil spirits, and certain other strange creatures such as owls were the embodiment of suspicious power. It was one's duty to drive away such animals. Evil spirits often hid themselves in the ground, but little hillocks always formed over them, thus revealing their hiding places. Many of these beings were non-natural rather than supernatural, but, whether "above" man or not, their otgon or malefic power was dangerous and one did well to propitiate or to get rid of them.<sup>26</sup>

Formal worship usually was not accorded these minor spirits, but it was customary to offer them presents. Such offerings, of tobacco particularly and of other plants and of animals, were made for propitiatory purposes or for getting aid or warding off evil, to spirits that could help or hurt man. For example, in collecting ginseng one sprinkled a little tobacco on the first plant found, for good luck, and left the plant untouched. Not to do so would indicate a lack of respect for the spirit. A Jesuit missionary relates that, in passing a wayside deity whose presence was made known by a couple of

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, I, 154, 155; cf. 194, 211.

<sup>25</sup> Morgan, I, 152; cf. 194, 211.

Mrs. Smith, 53. Canfield, 51-53. Converse, 63-66; 185-186. Parker: *Maize*, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Clark: *Onondaga*, I, 43, 47.

Mrs. Smith, 53, 59-62, and the picture of a Flying-Head, Plate XV, facing p. 64.

Converse, 47-48, 51-52, 74-87.

Cusick, 5-11.

Schoolcraft: *Notes*, 154, 156-161.

Beauchamp in *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, XIV, 348-349.

round stones on the roadside, it was customary to throw a small stick on the stones by way of homage and to add these words: "Here is something to pay my passage, that I may proceed in safety."<sup>27</sup> The Fathers have left an interesting account of another offering.

"Arriving within three-quarters of a league of the Falls by which Lake St. Sacrement empties, we all halted at this Spot, without knowing why, until we saw our Savages at the water-side gathering up flints, which were almost all cut into shape. We did not at that time reflect upon this, but have since then learned the meaning of the mystery; for our Iroquois told us that they never fail to halt at this place, to pay homage to a race of invisible men who dwell there at the bottom of the lake. These beings occupy themselves in preparing flints, nearly all cut, for the passers-by, providing the latter pay their respects to them by giving them tobacco. If they give these beings much of it, the latter give them a liberal supply of these stones. These water-men travel in canoes, as do the Iroquois; and, when their great Captain proceeds to throw himself into the water to enter his Palace, he makes so loud a noise that he fills with fear the minds of those who have no knowledge of this great Spirit and of those little men. . . . We asked them if they did not also give some tobacco to the great spirit of Heaven, and to those who dwell with him. The answer was that they do not need any, as do the people on the earth. The occasion of this . . . story is the fact that the Lake is, in reality, often agitated by very frightful tempests."<sup>28</sup>

Evil spirits, many of whom were classed under the name False-Faces, had to be placated and soothed so that they would not deal harshly with man. There was a band of human False-Faces, for they wore hideous masks, that propitiated the un-earthly ones by a dance. Since evil spirits caused illness, as the Jesuits so often relate, the False-Faces were regarded as curers of disease and were called in time of need.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes evil was avoided by the observance of a taboo. A Jesuit reports that on one occasion he arrived at a spring whose water the Iroquois dared not drink because there was an evil spirit in it that rendered it foul. It proved to be a spring of salt

<sup>27</sup> XLIV *J. R.* (1656-1658), 25-27.

<sup>28</sup> LI *J. R.* (1667-1668), 181-183.

<sup>29</sup> Morgan, I, 157-160.

Converse, 74-78 (with pictures). On the confusion of the False-Faces and the Flying-Heads, 79 note 2.

water.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes an evil spirit could be coerced. If such a spirit were hidden in the ground, an Iroquois, by bending a sapling over near the hillock that showed where the demon lurked and tying the top branch to the roots, could cause the hillock to disappear. That meant the evil spirit had moved on and its evil power was overcome.<sup>31</sup>

### DREAMS.

So important a position did dreams hold among the Iroquois that they require special consideration. Arthur C. Parker has said that only the close student of savage races can know the extent to which dreams influence primitive minds.<sup>32</sup> His statement is true for the Indians. Although the rôle of the dream among the Iroquois of the nineteenth century has lessened considerably, chiefly because of missionary teaching (see below, p. 56), nevertheless such information teaching points unmistakably to the fact that the Iroquois in the past were no exception to Parker's generalization. The Indians knew that through dreams medicines could be discovered, the cure for ills learned, rain could be caused, and other desirable powers or knowledge could be acquired. Through dreams, among the Indians of the Plains, women even could acquire new decorative designs. Moreover, only through the dream could youth acquire the aid of a spirit in order to make a success of life. On the whole the Indian believed sincerely in dreams and regarded them as a most important and widely used means for increasing one's power and knowledge. Some Blackfoot Indians, for instance, assured Clark Wissler that Edison's invention of the phonograph must have been the result of a dream, for of course that was the way one acquired

<sup>30</sup> XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 123-125. Cf. also Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 112. Lafitau, I, 179-180. Sagard, I, 456-457. Bacqueville de La Potherie: *Histoire*, III, 4. Loskiel, Pt. I, 44-45.

<sup>31</sup> *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, XIV, 348-349. In Hewitt's translations of the cosmologic myths, Good, the brother of Evil, is called Sapling. Is there any connection between the good spirit, Sapling, and the practice just mentioned?

<sup>32</sup> Converse, 94 note 1. Cf. LI *J. R.* (1666-1668), 123-125. Radin, u. s., 364-369.

such extraordinary information.<sup>33</sup> Father Chaumonot bewailed the fact that the Iroquois clung so tenaciously to his faith in dreams.

"Dreams form one of the chief hindrances to their Conversion; and to these they are so attached that they attribute to them all their past great successes, both in war and in hunting. Now, as they well know that the belief in dreams is incompatible with the Faith, they become even more obstinate, especially, as they are aware of the fact that, the moment the Hurons received the Faith and abandoned their dreams, their ruin began, and their whole Country has ever since been declining to its final total destruction."<sup>34</sup>

He who desired the help of the spirits that appear in dreams usually must go off to some lonely spot and there fast, pray, center his mind upon the dream and the dream spirit and so make himself fit to receive a dream. Success depended upon religious conduct (see below p. 75).

The Iroquois at least two centuries ago were wont to celebrate one of their most important religious festivals in connection with the deity of the dream, Tarenyawagon, in his capacity of Sender of Dreams. In those days the Iroquois implicitly obeyed the behests of that deity as delivered by his messenger, Aikon. Some widely known accounts of the lengths to which the Iroquois would go in carrying out the will of the god as revealed in the dream have been written by the Jesuit missionaries. The good Fathers had little sympathy for the Iroquois attitude toward dreams and consequently were impressed most by the spectacular conduct of the natives. It does seem that some of the Iroquois were interested in making spectacles of themselves and in little else, but between the lines in the Jesuit accounts of dream practices can be seen the unusually strong emotion aroused, the earnest desire to do or to have what was dreamed and the abiding faith in the dream. Fathers Dablon and Chaumonot relate that they saw a celebration of the New Year's Festival for the "Demon of Dreams" in 1656, on February 22, 23 and 24.

"The elders go to proclaim it through the streets of the town. . . . As soon as this festival was announced by these public cries,

<sup>33</sup> Wissler: *Ceremonial Bundles of the Blackfoot Indians*, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., VII (1912), 102.

<sup>34</sup> XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 135.



nothing was to be seen but men, women and children running like madmen through the streets and through the cabins, but in quite a different fashion from European masqueraders. Most of them are nearly naked and seem not to feel the cold, which is almost unbearable to those who are the best covered. It is true that some give no other sign of their madness than to run half naked through all the cabins; but others are mischievous; some carry water or something worse and throw it upon those they meet; others take firebrands, coals and ashes and scatter them about without caring on whom they fall. Others break the kettles and dishes and all the houseware that they find in their course. Some go armed with swords, bayonets, knives, hatchets or cudgels, and pretend to strike with those every one they meet, and all this continues until their dream is guessed and fulfilled; as to which there are two things quite remarkable.

"The first is that it sometimes happens that one is not clever enough to divine their thoughts, for they do not state them clearly, but by enigmas, by phrases of hidden meaning, by signs and sometimes by gestures alone; so that good Oedipuses are not always found. Nevertheless they will not leave the spot until their thought is divined, and if one delays too long, if one does not wish to divine it, or if one cannot, they threaten to burn up everything; which comes to pass only too often . . . One of these idiots darted into our cabin and insisted that we should guess his dream and fulfil it. . . . One of our hosts . . . came to him to learn what he wanted. The maniac answered, 'I kill a Frenchman, that is my dream which must be fulfilled at any cost.' Our host threw him a French coat, as if it had been taken from a dead man, and at the same time began himself to rage, saying that he wished to avenge the death of the Frenchman, that his destruction should be followed by that of the whole village, which he was going to reduce to ashes, beginning with his own cabin. Thereupon he drove out his relatives and friends and house-people and all the crowd that had gathered to see the issue of this disturbance. Thus left alone, he shut the doors and set the whole place on fire. At the moment when everybody expected to see the whole house in flames Father Chaumonot came up, returning from an errand of charity. He saw an awful smoke pouring from his bark house and being told what it was he burst in the door, threw himself into the midst of the fire and smoke, threw out the firebrands, put out the fire, and gently prevailed upon his host to leave, contrary to the expectation of all the populace, who never resist the fury of the Demon of Dreams. The man continued in his fury. He ran through the streets and cabins, shouting loudly that he was going to set everything on fire to avenge the death of the Frenchman. They brought him a dog to be the victim of his wrath and of the Demon of his passion. 'That is not enough,' he said, 'to wipe out the shame and the affront which has been done to me in wishing to kill a Frenchman lodging in my house.' A second dog was brought to him, and he was appeased at once and returned home as quietly as if nothing had happened. . . .

"Our host wished to play his part as well as the others. He dressed himself like a Satyr, covering himself with corn husks from head to foot. He made two women array themselves like real Megaras, their hair flying, their faces black as coal, their bodies covered with two wolf skins, each woman carrying a club or a great stake. The Satyr seeing them well equipped marched through our cabin singing and howling at the top of his voice. Then climbing on the roof he performed a thousand antics, shouting as if everything had gone to destruction, which done, he descended, marched gravely all around the town, the two Megaras leading on and smashing everything they met with their stakes. . . .

"Scarce had our Satyr and our Megaras disappeared from view when a woman rushed into our cabin. She was armed with an arquebus which she had obtained by her dream. She shouted, howled, sang, saying that she was going off to war with the Eries, that she would fight them and bring back prisoners, with a thousand imprecations and a thousand maledictions if the thing did not come to pass as she had dreamed. A warrior followed this amazon. He carried his bow and arrows in his hand and a dagger. He dances, he sings, he shouts, he threatens; then suddenly he rushes at a woman who had come in to see this comedy; he levels the dagger at her throat, takes her by the hair, contents himself with cutting off a few locks, and then withdraws to give place to a Diviner who had dreamed that he could find everything that was hidden. He was ridiculously dressed and held in his hand a sort of caduceus which he used to point out the place where a thing was hidden. Nevertheless his companion who carried a pot filled with some liquor or other had to fill his mouth with it and blow it over the head and over the face, over the hands and over the caduceus of the Diviner, who then never failed to find the article in question. That is all I can tell.

"A woman came next with a mat which she spread out and arranged as if she wished to catch some fish. This meant that we must give her some because she had dreamed it.

"Another simply laid a mattock on the ground. They divined that she wanted a field or a piece of ground. That was just what she had in mind, and she was satisfied with five furrows for planting Indian corn.

"After that they put before us a little grotesque puppet. We declined it and it was placed before other persons, and after they had mumbled some words they carried it off without further ceremony.

"One of the chiefs of the town appeared in wretched attire. He was all covered with ashes, and because no one guessed his dream, which called for two human hearts, he caused the ceremony to be prolonged by a day, and continued his mad actions during all the time. He entered our cabin, where there are several fireplaces, stopped at the first, threw ashes and coals into the air, and at the second and third fires did the same, but did nothing at ours, out of respect.

"Some came fully armed and as if they were in combat with the enemy, posturing, shouting, and scuffling like two armies in battle.



"Others march in bands, and perform dances with contortions of the body like men possessed. In short, one would never be done, if he undertook to relate everything they do during the three days and three nights that this madness lasts, with such a racket that one cannot find a moment of quiet. . . .

"It would be a cruelty and a sort of murder not to give a man what his dream called for, for the refusal might cause his death. Therefore they may see themselves stripped of their all without any hope of recompense. For whatever they give is never returned to them, unless they dream it themselves, or pretend to dream it. In general they are too scrupulous to make such a pretence, which would, as they suppose, cause all sorts of misfortunes. Yet those are found who disregard their scruples and enrich themselves by a clever fiction. . . .

"A poor woman was not so fortunate in her dream. She ran about day and night and got only an illness. They tried to cure her with the ordinary remedies of the country, which are emetics of certain roots steeped in water, but they made her drink so much that she died immediately, her stomach bursting to give passage to two kettles of water which they had made her take.

"A young man of our cabin got off with being well powdered. He dreamed that he was buried in ashes. When he woke he wished his dream to come true, so he invited ten of his friends to a feast to fulfil his dream. They acquitted themselves excellently of this commission, covering him with ashes from head to foot and stuffing them into his nose and into his ears and everywhere. We were disgusted with such a ridiculous ceremony, but everyone else regarded it in silent admiration as a grand mystery."<sup>35</sup>

It was not in the dream festival alone that the dream functioned, for Tarenyawagon, the Master of Their Lives, might make known at any time through the medium of a dream what was his will and what was needful for the preservation of the Iroquois' lives. Hence, whenever the dream occurred, that which was seen in the dream had to be performed immediately. One Iroquois found it necessary in fulfilling his dream to have his house burned, while another had to have his own legs roasted, and so well was that done that it took six months for him to recover.<sup>36</sup> Fathers Dablon and Chaumonot left another

<sup>35</sup> Morgan, II (note 95), 255-260. The original is given in XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 154-168. Lloyd's translation differs from that given, *ibid.*, 155-169. Beauchamp has it also in his *Iroquois Trail*, 119-123. Cf. remarks on dreams made by Wissler in *Ceremonial Bundles*, 72-103, 263; and in his *Decorative Art of the Sioux Indians*, *Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, Bull. XVIII (1902-1907), 247.

<sup>36</sup> XLVII *J. R.* (1661-1662), 179-181; cf. XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), 273.

account of the fulfilling of a dream during the performance of so practical a task as that of conducting these missionaries to Onondaga. One Indian had a horrible dream. It was so difficult to calm him in order that the party could go on that his companions had to resort to extreme measures. He dreamed of fighting with aquatic animals, so his friends pretended they were as mad as he and also fought with animals living in the water. They prepared to sweat themselves in order to get him to do likewise. "As he cried and sang aloud during the process of sweating, imitating the cry of the animals with which he was fighting, so they also began to cry and sing aloud the cries of those animals which they pretended to be fighting, every one striking the poor fellow in the cadence of their song. Imagine what a chorus of twenty voices, imitating ducks, teal and frogs, and what a sight to see so many men pretending to be mad in order to cure a mad man. They succeeded well."<sup>37</sup>

One of the most important functions of the dream was to bring assistance to the youth who had attained puberty and was about to take up the responsibilities of manhood. Religious ceremonial was necessary to make certain the success of this fateful step, and it emphasized for the boy as nothing else could the importance of man's estate. At this grave time the Iroquois father would make clear to his son the importance of the Dream Fast. Then the youth, according to custom, prepared himself for the dream by going off to a simple lodge in some lonesome spot where he remained for at least a week, fasting, hunting dangerous animals or in other ways seeking to show that he was brave, praying and hoping for a dream. If the dream spirit appeared it probably would point out to the lad how he could best serve his community. He was to be a mighty hunter or a shaman or a warrior. It also would tell him the object or charm whose spirit would protect him throughout life, and that object was to be cherished. Such a guardian spirit has been called the *oki*. Mrs. Converse called the dream spirit the spirit of the clan, saying that the spirit which appeared in the dream really was the spirit of the clan into which the boy had been born. If the youth was so unfortunate as not to have a visitation from the dream

<sup>37</sup> Cf. XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 65-69.

spirit, the chiefs, who kept in touch with him, permitted him to return to the village. But he felt disgraced and was unhappy because he had no dream object to invoke in time of need.<sup>38</sup>

In order that the continued good will of the guardian spirit or oki be assured, the Iroquois made it presents. The oki being so important it was natural that the dream object associated with it should be carried as a charm. How efficacious these charms, or skins, feathers or other portions of the dream animal or plant, were believed to be, is illustrated by the fact that when Gansevoort captured the baggage of the Iroquois at the battle of Oriskany they lost all heart in the campaign because their charms at the same time fell into his hands.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, dreams possessed curative powers. The Jesuits state that the medicine men often would have the sick dream to effect a cure. "It frequently occurs, however, that a hot fever, by causing grotesque and senseless dreams, gives the poor Medicine-men much trouble."<sup>40</sup> Dream objects themselves helped to effect cures and therefore were preserved carefully. "When they are ill, they cover themselves with these, or put them near at hand, as a defense against the attacks of the disease." Strong as was this faith in dreams it is not surprising that in the strength of good health the Iroquois sometimes paid no heed to them.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 110.

Sagard, I, 455; Lafitau, I, 126, 145, 336-341, 370.

Loskiel, Pt. I, 39-40, 63; Heckewelder, ch. XXXIII.

Brinton: *Myths of the New World*, 45.

*Am. A. and O. Jour.*, XIV, 345, 346.

Converse, 107-108. Myth called "Jis-go-ga, the Robin." There is a beautiful picture of "The dawn drink of the dream faster" accompanying a fine tale of initiation, 107-110.

The rôle of the totem in Iroquois religion is not known definitely. Usually it has been confused with the oki by writers, while the Iroquois legends themselves are silent on the matter. Dr. Goldenweiser maintains that, if the totem did function in religious ceremonial, all evidence has disappeared so that no proof can be given. Goldenweiser, u. s., Rep. for 1912, 466-467; cf. 470 and Rep. for 1913, 371.

<sup>39</sup> Morgan, II (note 62), 233.

<sup>40</sup> XLVII *J. R.* (1661-1662), 181.

<sup>41</sup> LIV *J. R.* (1669-1671), 65-67, 101.

## SOULS.

The Iroquois reactions to dreams, coma, faints and the like were sometimes religious and sometimes matter of fact. An Iroquois, for example, was familiar with the fact that from time to time the soul left the body and visited some spot. Such a dream was a phenomenon easily understood and explained. He had little or no religious feeling about it. But when he and his fellows gathered together in a cabin on a dark night and, about a dulled fire, prayed until the invited shades of their dead returned to them, the religious attitude was evoked and a religious act was performed. To recognize a given belief or practice concerning the soul as religious or not is sometimes impossible for the Iroquois himself made no such distinctions. Genuine understanding, therefore, of such Iroquois notions and practices concerning souls as appear to be religious can not be attained without some knowledge also of those other notions and practices concerning the soul that in fact were mingled inextricably with the religious.<sup>42</sup>

By the time the Whites became acquainted with the Iroquois some of the peculiar phenomena of human and animal be-

<sup>42</sup> Hewitt: "Iroquoian Concept of the Soul," *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, VIII, 107-116. This fine article intermingles fact and interpretation. The facts are not gainsaid, but the interpretations are not always acceptable.

Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 115-118, 146-148. He discusses the concept of the soul, its future and the practices connected with the dead, including the celebration of the Festival of the Dead.

Lafitau, I, 359-360, 361, 363-367, on beliefs concerning the souls of human beings and of animals, and the relation of the soul to dreams; II, 386-458, states in detail the practices connected with death; 446-458 give the duodecennial Feast of the Dead, including the collection of bones, making of presents, chanting, etc. Cf. 399, 413-416; 420.

La Hontan: *Voyages to N. A.*, II, 435-436, 471-474, on ideas concerning the soul and the disposition of the dead.

Sagard, I, 457-458, on the soul and its future; II, ch. XLV; ch. XLVI describes the Feast of the Dead.

Bacqueville, III, 6-11 on the soul as the agent of desire; etc.

Hale: *Book of Rites*, 70-73. For the soul in legends see Converse, 94-96; *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 47-48 (cf. Converse, 84-87); *Ib.*, I, 195, 196, 200; *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, XIV, 346-347; *Am. Anthr.*, XI, 286-287; *Iroquois Trail*, 109-112 *passim*.

Other accounts of practices are referred to in notes 45-52 below.



havior had led to a crystallization of speculation with regard to the psychic self. Souls were refined yet material, shadow-like yet with bodily form and with all bodily organs and other parts, and keen-sighted only at night. To some a soul was mortal, but others said it could not be killed. Every person possessed one sensitive soul which dwelt in the very marrow of the bones and which animated the body. Even after death it lived on in the skeleton. This sensitive soul was usually malevolent, being fond of human flesh, which it hunted. In states of violent passion the sensitive soul dominated the body. / De Quens, writing of the Iroquois in the Relation of 1655-1656 said, "These people believe that sadness, anger, and all violent passions expel the rational soul from the body, which, meanwhile, is animated only by the sensitive soul, which we have in common with animals."<sup>43</sup> In addition to the sensitive soul every person possessed one or more rational or intelligent souls which dwelt in the head. This reasonable soul was also carnivorous, but it rarely ate human flesh. It could make its wishes known and resembled, in body and desires, the very man himself. The intelligent soul could leave the body and return at will, going anywhere in remarkably short time, living a lifetime in remarkably few moments and never getting lost. Usually such trips had an object in view. There was something the soul wanted. When apparently without any outward stimulus a person suddenly desired something, the need was that of the soul which made its wish known to him because it was for his good. Tarenyawagon, said the Wise Ones, informed the soul of what was needed through the medium of dreams. At death the intelligent soul lived in or near the corpse, wandering about the village by night in search of food and devouring what it could find unprotected. To make it quiescent a ceremony must be performed. After this Feast of the Dead it would begin the difficult journey westward to join the souls of members of its own tribe in their village there. In that village it would live much as it had when incorporated in a body. Of course, so long and so difficult a journey was beyond the powers of endurance of the souls of children and of old and weak persons, so these remained about the village. Otherwise unaccountable slapping of flaps and banging of

<sup>43</sup> XLII J. R. (1632-1657), 51.



doors about the house indicated the comings and goings of these harmless souls. Just after death souls could hear and understand. They could revisit their old abodes. Such a soul might be born again in some child. Sometimes the struggle of souls to get to the surface of the earth caused an earthquake.<sup>44</sup> Finally, every animal, bird, fish and insect had a soul, good or bad according as the living creature was considered good or bad. The soul of each of these creatures had a bodily form similar to that of the animal itself. Such a soul lived after the death of the body, could see how the body was treated and would act accordingly, either urging their living kin to permit themselves to be taken for food or urging them to escape the hunter.

Since the soul was to live in the West as it had lived here, it must have suitable weapons, food and raiment; so with the body were buried such things. A fine description of the ceremonies following the death of an Iroquois has been given by a Jesuit.

"As soon as anyone dies in a cabin, one hears in it the cries and lamentations uttered by the assembled relatives of all ages and both sexes; and so frightful are they that one would take that lugubrious uproar, which lasts for months and even for entire years (that is, the ceremony is repeated until the decennial or duodecennial Festival of the Dead is celebrated), from the howlings of Hell. Meanwhile,—after the dead man is buried, and his grave is filled with provisions for the sustenance of his soul, and after a sort of sacrifice has been offered to him by burning a certain quantity of corn,—the elders, with the friends and relatives of the deceased are invited to a feast, to which each one brings his presents to console the most afflicted. . . . One of the most notable of the Elders, with grave demeanor, exclaimed in a lugubrious voice: . . . 'Alas, alas, my beloved relatives! I have neither mind nor words wherewith to console you. I can do nothing but mingle my tears with yours, and complain of the severity of the illness that treats us so ill. . . . But take courage my relatives! Let us not cause sorrow any longer to so honorable a guest (the French); but let us dry up the tears of Onnontio (Iroquois name for French Governor-General) by wiping away our own. Here is a present that will dry up their source.' . . . The ceremony concluded with a

<sup>44</sup> The inconsistency is very noticeable. Why were these souls underground and not in the realms of the shades in the West? How can the persistence of these beliefs be reconciled with the later notion that the sky was the final dwelling place and the Milky Way the road thereto?

feast, the best morsels of which were reserved for the sick persons of rank in the Village. As all this could not arrest the tears and the cries of one mother, one of the relatives, in order to testify his devotion by consoling her, disinterred the dead body; and, after clothing it with new garments, he threw the grave-clothes into the fire. This he did two or three times on different occasions until he found nothing but the bare bones, which he wrapped up in a covering to present them to the afflicted woman. Finally, some time after these ceremonies, the liberality of those who had given presents of consolation is acknowledged by distributing among them the effects of the deceased."<sup>45</sup>

The great Festival of the Dead formerly was held once in twelve years and was a great ceremony of reinterment, a solemn "feast of the dead," as the Iroquois called it. The bodies of those of the tribe who had died during the preceding twelve years were exhumed, if they had been buried, or were taken down from the scaffold on which they had been laid. The decaying corpses and the clean bones of those long dead were placed into one large pit which had been lined with robes made of beaver skins, the most valuable of all Iroquois furs. Such valued possessions as wampum, copper implements and earthenware were thrown into the pit, and then the grave was filled with earth. While this ceremony was going on, rich presents of all kinds that had been gathered during the past twelve years, were distributed among the people by the relatives of the deceased. In this distribution it often happened that valuable fur robes were cut and torn into pieces. To lavishly display wealth and to recklessly destroy it were deemed honors due to the shades of the departed. This feast disappeared during the seventeenth century and was replaced in part by the Condolence.<sup>46</sup>

At sundry times, probably before the summer and the winter seasons, a feast was spread for the souls of the departed, who, if bidden, would revisit the habitations of men. A well-known wampum-keeper of the Iroquois writing in the last century, quaintly described this ceremony through his "messenger," a letter.

<sup>45</sup> XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), 267-271. See further Morgan, II, 276; Clark, I, 51-52; Lafitau, II, 339, 413-416, 420, 446-458; Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 146-148; Sagard, II, 639 sq., 654-657; Bacqueville, III, 8-11.

<sup>46</sup> Hale: *Book of Rites*, 72-73 (see below pp. 75 sq. and note 3, p. 76). Cf. X *J. R.* (1636), 143. Handsome Lake pointed out the evils connected with burial rites. See below p. 64 and Parker: *Code*, 107-112.

"I am John Buck's messenger. Therefore listen. John Buck says in olden times of my forefathers was able to recall their departed relatives to see them again, the living ones will make one accord whatever the number they may be will get a feast at a certain house for the dead ones, and when the living ones will assemble at the appointed place each of them will take a sliver off the bark door where it turns, this at their different one's houses, and enter noiselessly in the house where the feast is spread out for the dead, and they will now all set down next to the wall of the house on the ground all around the house, and the feast is spread out in the centre of the house, and one is appointed as a speaker to address the Great Creator<sup>47</sup> at intervals he would throw an Indian Tobacco on the fire, he will ask the Creator to send their dead relatives, for they are desirous to see them again, and when he ends it, his speaking, he will sit down again, and they will let the fire go down till the light ceases, so that in the house becomes dark and no one is allowed to speak or to make any noise, and in a little while they will have people coming outside, and they will enter the house and will set themselves around the spread feast, and the assembled living ones will wait until the dead ones are about done eating, then the living ones will kindle the slivers of bark which they have brought with them, and the dead are now seen through this light. Here is a string of wampum. . . .<sup>48</sup>

I am your friend,

CHIEF JOHN BUCK.

Fire keeper of Six Nations, Canada."<sup>49</sup>

A year after a death, if the bereaved family asked therefor, the Dance of the Dead was given. This dance was performed secretly for one whole night by women.

There were several practices connected with beliefs about souls that were not a part of special ceremonies. Since souls remained for a time near the village and needed food, it was customary to place edibles on the graves or in separate receptacles on the dining table. For the spirits of the weak and the old who could not go to the West, corn was heaped up from time to time in a little pile. These spirits, however, often provided food for themselves by hunting and by planting corn,

<sup>47</sup> Since the idea of a Great Creator was not Iroquoian it may be that in olden days the shades were addressed directly, if at all.

<sup>48</sup> The giving of wampum solemnly attested the truth of the statements of the giver or he or they whom the giver represented. It was like our formal signature or seal.

<sup>49</sup> *Iroquois Trail*, 108-109. Buck, as official wampum-keeper, was in a position better to know of his people's past than others, for the wampum was the official record, each string being a document the reading of which fell to the official keeper.

which is recognizable as ghost- or squirrel-corn. When a nursing child was taken out at night the mother rubbed its face with some white ashes to keep spirits away, for having come so recently from the spirit world, the baby could converse with them and might be enticed. A more pronounced religious element appears in the practices connected with the vanquishing of the discontented souls of those who had been buried improperly, or of the revengeful souls of those done to death by violence whether torture or some other form, or of the malevolent souls of sorcerers. Such were feared and were scared away from the village by the loud crying of "Haii, Haii, Haii,"<sup>50</sup> and by much banging and knocking and doing of violent acts, the total uproar being very effective for the purpose of inspiring both terror and the desire to get away, in the hearts of lurking ghosts. De Quens mentioned that in states of violent passion the rational soul was driven from the body. So, said he, when a person was angry or was seized with a fierce desire for revenge, the people would make him a present in order "to restore the rational soul to the seat of reason."<sup>51</sup> Since the souls of dead animals were jealous of the treatment accorded their corpses and could make hunting bad, those creatures that were useful as food or in other ways were handled carefully. Dogs, for example, were not allowed to gnaw the bones of a deer, an elk, a beaver or any other food or pelt animal since the soul of that animal would be displeased and therefore would spoil a hunt.<sup>52</sup> Sometimes, to prevent any ill-treatment befalling the bones of such animals, the Iroquois would preserve them carefully or cast them into a running stream.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Wizards and witches dealt with and received power from evil spirits.<sup>53</sup> They could transform themselves into animals such as hogs, dogs, and particularly owls. To bring about such a change a mysterious charm was used, of which the fol-

<sup>50</sup> XLII *J. R.* (1655-1556), 137-139.

<sup>51</sup> *Ib.*, 51.

<sup>52</sup> How very "human" animals often were, is shown by many tales in *Converse*; for example, 114-116, 118-124, 151-152. Cf. Barbeau, *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Parker: *Code*, 27 note 3.



lowing is an illustration. Two bits of witch medicine acquired recently by M. R. Harrington consisted "of bits of woody root, one, the larger and older, being about an inch and a quarter long by half as thick, with the surface fairly covered with tiny carved faces of men and animals; while the smaller, about half as large, bears but one carved face."<sup>54</sup> The name of the charm, *otkantra* or *utgontra*, clearly includes the term *otgon*, meaning evil power.

Properly speaking, the Iroquois had no priestly class. In olden days, at festivals and such other occasions as necessitated a leader, an old man acted in that capacity. There was, however, a class of men who performed few of the ordinary duties of warriors and who were appealed to in time of need, be it illness, impending war or other crisis whose outcome could be affected by religious or magical practices. Charlevoix, in speaking of the preparation for war, mentions among other things, the part played by the medicine men. They dance and sing in order that *Agreskoue* aid the Iroquois warriors, and thus they mitigate risks and improve the chances for success. Father Jogues has told above how an old man offered some stag-meat to *Agreskoue*, and it may be inferred that he was a shaman.<sup>55</sup> According to the Jesuit Relations the chief functions of such men were connected with illness. Illness was caused by evil spirits. Toothache, for example, was caused by demons. When Father Millet removed a sufferer's decayed tooth thus stopping the pain, he caused great excitement<sup>56</sup> for the common means was, after preliminary fasting by the patient and after personal exaltation on the part of the medicine man, to draw out the power of the demon by abstracting from the patient bits of wood or leaves or stones or other objects.<sup>57</sup> Some shamans had live crystals within them which could be expelled through the nose or mouth. If the crystal were placed in a gourd of water it would make visible the apparition of a person who had bewitched another. By applying the crystal to a bewitched person, hairs, straws, leaves, pebbles and other small objects could be extracted, thus reliev-

<sup>54</sup> *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., XI, 87.

<sup>55</sup> Vid. p. 30 above.

<sup>56</sup> LVII *J. R.* (1672-1673), 147-149.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. p. 87 sq. and note 30, p. 88 below.



ing the sufferer. Sometimes a medicine man, after boiling certain roots or herbs in a small kettle, held a blanket over his head and the kettle. Then he could see clearly the image of a witch in the liquid.<sup>58</sup>

Among the Iroquois, as among so many other peoples, women were taboo to all during the menstrual period, particularly at its first occurrence. At that time the girl had to live alone for several days in a secluded hut, where she fasted and performed difficult tasks.<sup>59</sup> At puberty, also, she was given a string with which to tie her limbs together above the knee when she retired. This string she kept all her life and used when she wished. No man dared to untie it. Pregnant women and those with children just born were taboo, and their husbands abstained from them. Women in periodic condition had to leave the house when a medicine man was about to cure a person who was ill. Hunting medicines and weapons were taboo to women. A faithless wife would bring bad luck and misfortune upon her husband no matter where he happened to be. Except in these cases, that emotional fear of women at certain times, which is so often exhibited in other parts of the world through the use of taboos, rarely was to be noticed among the Iroquois. A taboo widely observed among many tribes, for example, was that men about to go on a hunt must be continent, if they would succeed. But an Iroquois off for a hunt might take along his wife or, if she did not want to go, a captive or a "free woman." In many parts of the world, also, a warrior who desired success had to be continent; but among the Iroquois that was not the case, although over-indulgence was frowned upon as being unduly weakening.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Witches and shamans are discussed in Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 127-128, 136.

Lafitau, I, 373-394.

De Cost Smith: "Witchcraft . . .," in *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 184-194; II, 277-281.

Mrs. Smith, ch. III.

Converse, 87-92.

Beauchamp in *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, V, 223-229.

Morgan, I, 156.

Clark, I, 42-47.

<sup>59</sup> Goldenweiser, u. s. (1912), 470. Cf. Charlevoix: *Voyage*, II, 41.

<sup>60</sup> Charlevoix, *ib.*

Lafitau, I, 257, 262.

XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 177.

Taboos of other kinds, but like the above aiming either to avoid some undefined evil or to insure success, were employed from time to time. Some of them were religious prohibitions such as the interdict laid upon food during a boy's initiation. Others were akin to the religious but now appear to be mainly magical, such as the prohibition of the performance of the Condolence Ceremony while crops were growing, or the mandate that the white dog used in the New Year's Festival must be killed without shedding a drop of its blood. Similar in nature were such other taboos as that a salt spring never must be tasted (the Iroquois did not know of salt until the Whites came), that the bones of animals valuable as food or for their pelts never must be eaten by dogs, that myths should not be told in the summer, and that a man never must witness the performance by the women, of the Dance of the Dead. Finally, some taboos were chiefly social prohibitions, of which the outstanding illustration was the ban upon the marriage of individuals of the same clan system. On the whole taboos appear not to have been widely used by the Iroquois.

*Women's dance of the  
death by women*

## CHAPTER III.

### IROQUOIS RELIGION.

(CHIEFLY IN AND AFTER THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND AFFECTED  
BY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES.)

#### DIVERGENCE OF CHRISTIAN AND IROQUOIS POINTS OF VIEW.

To know all the changes in the Iroquois religion wrought by the influence of the Whites before the nineteenth century is impossible because the material bearing upon the subject is so very scanty. The myths help somewhat. But their age is often so indeterminate, and internal evidence alone is not proof positive. The many volumes containing the sources for colonial New York probably give no more information about the problem than the few statements which will be mentioned later. There remain but Heckewelder, whose main interest was in the Delawares, the Jesuits, whose work among the Iroquois was discontinued about the middle of the eighteenth century and Loskiel, whose treatment is brief and who, like Heckewelder, deals with the later decades of that century and with the Indians of the Middle East.

Three facts characterized the Iroquois attitude toward Christian teaching. The Iroquois, worldly in thought and interest, interpreted the words of missionaries literally. They expected peace, good-will and success here and now. Contrary to their expectations, however, they saw the Huron converts to Christianity go to their death while they, the pagans, caused that death, and prospered!<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the white people themselves failed to guide their living by their preaching. This Indian complaint is noted by Heckewelder whose wording of it portrays the Indian interpretation of missionary teaching.

“And yet these white men would always be telling us of their great Book which God had given to them, they would persuade us that every man was good who believed in what the Book said, and every man was bad who did not believe in it. They told us a great many

<sup>1</sup> See p. 36.

things, which they said were written in the good Book, and wanted us to believe it all. We would probably have done so, if we had seen them practise what they pretended to believe, and act according to the good words which they told us. But no! While they held their big Book in one hand, in the other they had murderous weapons, guns and swords, wherewith to kill us, poor Indians! Ah! and they did so too, they killed those who believed in their Book, as well as those who did not. They made no distinction!"<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the Indian set himself up as the standard and measured thereby the ways of the white people.

"The Great Spirit, knowing the wickedness of their (the Whites') disposition, found it necessary to give them a great Book, and taught them how to read it, that they might know and observe what he wished them to do and to abstain from. But they, the Indians, have no need of any such book to let them know the will of their Maker; they find it engraved on their own hearts; they have had sufficient discernment given to them to distinguish good from evil, and by following that guide, they are sure not to err."<sup>3</sup>

The third fact is of great importance. The Iroquois view of Christianity was not Christian. It was Indian or pagan. It must be remembered that the Iroquois lived in a small universe in which also dwelt a miscellaneous host of spirits of diverse nature and character. Their wealth comprised but skins, a few tools and such, and their interests were concerned mainly with matters of food, war and success, and good fortune in this life. In such a milieu how could they comprehend the teachings of missionaries from Europe to whom life's emphasis was upon Christian faith, Christian love and Christian duty?<sup>4</sup> Father Millet saw the barrier.

"Faith holds The understanding Captive, and strives to subject man to the duties of a true Christian; but The Iroquois cannot endure The slightest Thing in the world that trammels Him. The nature of the savage is to live as he pleases, and to follow strange maxims only in so far as They suit him. . . . The Iroquois is not guided by reasons. The first idea that he has of Things is the sole light that illumines Him. . . . As a rule, they believe only what they see. To convert The upper Iroquois, it would be necessary to subdue Them to The faith by two arms, as it were—one of gold, and The other of iron; I mean to say, to win Them by presents, and to keep Them in subjection by

<sup>2</sup> Heckewelder, 188.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, 187.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Boyle, in *Jour. Anthr. Inst.*, XXX (n. s., III), 263-273.

The fear of arms. . . . Only The fear of some evil, or The hope of some temporal good can determine Them to embrace our religion."<sup>5</sup>

Such notions and practices, therefore, as might be borrowed from Christian teachings would be subject to alteration before they could fit Iroquois conditions and Iroquois ways of looking at things. Some of the beliefs and practices of the missionaries either did or seemed to harmonize with Iroquois ways of living and thinking. Like the missionary the native had his fasts and feasts, his solemn ceremonies and deities.<sup>6</sup> That is, there was some common ground upon which the missionary could work and obtain results.

#### CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES APPARENT BEFORE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Early missionaries relate that the idea of a Great Spirit as omnipotent and as ruler over all was not aboriginal. In 1624 Father Le Caron said, "'Their language, natural enough for anything else, is so sterile on this point that we can find no terms to express the Divinity, nor any of our mysteries, not even the most common.'" Sagard, a contemporary of Le Caron, said of the Hurons and Canadians that they "Seem to have neither customs nor practices relating to God that we could find out."<sup>8</sup> About a century later Charlevoix mentioned the fact of the confusion of the idea of a Great Spirit.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the myths fail to reveal one supreme god.<sup>10</sup> But the Jesuits, preaching and teaching, interruptedly, for almost a century after 1640, impressed a notion of God upon the

<sup>5</sup> LVII J. R. (1672-1673), 127-129.

<sup>6</sup> Beauchamp: "Early Religion . . .," *Am. A. and O. Jour.* (1892), XIV, 344.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*, 348.

<sup>8</sup> *Histoire*, I, 447. Cf. LI J. R. (1666-1668), 183; Donohoe, 198; Mrs. Smith, 51; Converse, 32 note 1; Brinton: *Myths of the New World*, 52; Parkman: *Jesuits*, I, 75.

<sup>9</sup> *Voyage to N. A.*, II, 107. Lafitau agrees with Charlevoix, *Mœurs des Sauvages*, I, 118. La Hontan, who spent his ten years in New France a generation before Charlevoix visited the country, affirms that the Indians believed in a Great Spirit (II, 434). One hesitates to accept his affirmation. His statement may be true for the Indians with whom he actually had contact and who had been under Jesuit influence for many years before La Hontan arrived in Canada.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Converse, Mrs. Smith, Canfield.



pagan Iroquois under the native name Hawenneyu, commonly translated Great Spirit. What the Iroquois could do most easily and what he did do, was to add this new god to those already known to him. Of the simple way in which the addition could be made, and of what was expected of the new deity, an anecdote about some Iroquois hunters gives illustration. They had gone out accompanied by their wives who were Christian converts. Several days passed fruitlessly so that the men were constrained to appeal to the women. "For some days now we have been coursing these great forests without finding anything. Why do you not pray to him who made the animals to give us some for our food, since you are acquainted with him?"<sup>11</sup> Apparently the Iroquois felt they had no claim upon a god whom they refused to worship, yet in time of need he was acceptable if he could and would fill Iroquois wants. It will be noticed that God was expected to act like an Iroquois deity. The first public mention, by a pagan Iroquois, of the name Great Spirit that has been found, was that made in the opening address at a conference held on September 12th, 1774. The speaker said, "We are very thankful to the Great Spirit for permitting all our Chiefs & Warriors to see you (Col. Guy Johnson) here this day, . . ." Johnson replied, "Brothers, I am heartily thankful to the Great Spirit for permitting me to see you all this day, . . ."<sup>12</sup> But in the Condolence performed subsequently the Great Spirit seems not to have been mentioned, and the old custom of "covering the grave, wiping away the tears, clearing the sky," and so forth, was adhered to.<sup>13</sup> Upon a similar occasion eighteen years before, the Great Spirit appears not to have been addressed at all.<sup>14</sup> The account of this meeting, however, is not so circumstantial as that given of the conference held by Johnson. Meager as it is this is the only bit of evidence found so far that gives a date for the emergence of the Great Spirit. If his name was used familiarly in a public address in 1774 it must have been used commonly for some years before. This new god soon appeared ancient and became the most important

<sup>11</sup> XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 177.

<sup>12</sup> *Col. Hist. of N. Y.*, VIII, 498.

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ib.*, VII, 133-134.

and the most powerful of all the Iroquois deities. In fact, as early as the seventh decade of the eighteenth century and despite long contact with Indians thereafter, Heckewelder did not recognize the Christian origin of Hawenneyu or of any of his attributes. Almost a century later such careful observers and students as J. V. H. Clark and L. H. Morgan were certain that the Great Spirit was entirely a native god.

In Iroquois eyes Hawenneyu was not the God of the Whites. He was peculiarly Indian. He was born. He created the Indians, and he ruled and preserved them.<sup>15</sup> He constantly superintended and administered the affairs of the world, that is to say, the affairs of the red men. According to Cornplanter he was a great and loving spirit whose extended arms bore up and encircled the universe. He created all the objects, both animate and inanimate, upon the earth. He smiled upon his people in sunshine and shower, and frowned upon them in fierce storms and whirlwinds. He peopled the air with millions of embodied spirits. Some of them were evil and, unless propitiated, caused pain, sickness, trouble and death; but others were good spirits and aided the hunter in his chase, the lover in his suit, and brought male offspring to the mother's arms. Finally, he had prepared for the Iroquois a "Happy Hunting-Ground" where every one should go after death. "There beautiful birds would make resonant the hills and valleys with their enchanting song. The Great Spirit had covered that vast and magnificent country with plains, and forests, and limpid streams, in which and over which would sport the red deer, bears, buffaloes, wild horses and all animals and fishes useful for clothing and food. . . ."<sup>16</sup> Such a spirit naturally would figure largely in ceremonial. The important rôle of the Great Spirit in Iroquois religion will be shown in the discussion below of Handsome Lake and the nineteenth century religious festivals.

The appearance and spread of these beliefs connected with the Great Spirit during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did much to minimize the worship of the deity most

<sup>15</sup> Yet the older myths of the origins of the Iroquois tribes and clans persist. Cf. Cusick, 11-14; Converse, 110-112; Canfield, 85-87. Barbeau: *Huron and Wyandot Mythology*, has a number of such myths.

<sup>16</sup> Canfield, 169-170.

antagonistic to the Christian teachings, namely Agreskoue. By the seventh decade of the seventeenth century the Jesuits were saying, "Many persons no longer invoke Agriskoue and this has often been professed in open assembly."<sup>17</sup> They asserted at the same time that the faith in dreams also was lessening. Yet as late as 1774 Colonel Johnson found it necessary to give a large kettle to be used at a dance, because of a dream. But it is true, nevertheless, that as the belief in the Great Spirit became more current that in Tarenyawagon and his messenger Aikon faded.<sup>18</sup> The other deities and spirits, great and small, appear to have been affected only in that they came somehow under the supervision of Hawenneyu. Their persistence and the persistence of the duties connected with them will be noted below in the accounts of the religious festivals of the past century.<sup>19</sup>

Since the seventeenth century a native innovation which has lasted almost to the present generation made its appearance from obscure beginnings. That animals were sacrificed sometimes has been seen. Dogs were so used frequently. For some unknown reason, possibly through Iroquois imitation of western neighbors, it became customary to sacrifice a white dog during the Feast of Dreams. As the belief in the Great Spirit strengthened and that in Tarenyawagon weakened the dream came to play a less responsible part and the ceremony came to center about the worship of the Great Spirit. The white dog, whose color represented peace and good-will even as white wampum symbolized them, was strangled during the ceremony and its soul was sent as a messenger to the Great Spirit. To him it presented the condition and wants of the Iroquois. The

<sup>17</sup> LVII *J. R.* (1672-1673), 123; cf. LIII *J. R.* (1669-1670), 239. LVIII *J. R.* (1673-1674), 205.

<sup>18</sup> LVIII *J. R.* (1673-1674), 205; LIII *J. R.* (1669-1670), ch. VII. In the latter, beginning on page 261, is a fine statement of how the missionaries worked and of their successes and failures. In the *Col. Hist. of N. Y.*, VIII, 522, it is stated that in December, 1774 "... Col: Johnson delivered a large kettle . . . to be used at a dance in consequence of a dream . . ." The effect of the Jesuit labors to do away with beliefs in dreams seems to have been that some of the barbarous practices were discontinued.

<sup>19</sup> See pp. 65-71. For further comment upon the Great Spirit:—Morgan, I, 144, 146-147, 154; Heckewelder, 100-102; Loskiel, Pt. I, ch. III; Converse, 32 note 1, 132; Boyle, u. s., 264-272.

details of this ceremony are told only by observers in the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

A missionary among the Hurons wrote in 1627 that "Our Indians believe that there is a certain invisible spirit which governs all, one good and one bad, yet without power to understand or specify which is the fortunate, which the unfortunate genius."<sup>21</sup> Their name for a devil was the same as that for a good spirit. The dualism which ranges "On one hand the good spirit with his legion of angels, on the other the evil one with his swarms of fiends, representing the world as the scene of their unending conflict, man as the unlucky football who gets all the blows, . . . is unknown to savage nations."<sup>22</sup> But, possessing the notion of spirits that were sometimes good and sometimes evil, it was possible for the Iroquois to adapt and to use the Christian idea of good as over against evil. In the creation myth, so powerfully affected by Christian theology, the cleavage was introduced. In that myth the spirits Sapling and Flint were respectively the embodiment of good and of evil. Sapling, as the good spirit, created all things good and made man and woman even as Adam and Eve had been made. Flint, as the evil spirit, created all things evil and fought the spirit of good. The myth was very definite upon the matter.<sup>23</sup> But other myths retained the notion that a spirit may at one time do good and at another, evil.<sup>24</sup> The False-Faces are a familiar illustration.

The heaven described by the missionary was adopted, but became modified considerably in the process. It was an Indian heaven only, no white persons being found there. George Washington was the only white man permitted in the region; even he, however, could not dwell in heaven, but had his abode just outside, on the road to it. To reach heaven the soul had

<sup>20</sup> Beauchamp, *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 198 sq. and note 2; *ib.*, VIII, 209-212; *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, XIV, 347-348.

Hale, *Am. A. and O. Jour.*, VII, 7-14, 235-239. Also Morgan, II, 262-265. Brief description of ceremony is given in text, pp. 69-70; see notes 41-46 thereto.

<sup>21</sup> Beauchamp: *Early Religion*, 345.

<sup>22</sup> Brinton, u. s., 59; cf. La Hontan, II, 448 and note; Loskiel, Pt. I, 34.

<sup>23</sup> See Ch. II, note 7, p. 27.

<sup>24</sup> See Converse, Canfield and Mrs. Smith.



to pass along the Path of Souls, called by us the Milky Way. This belief, however, little affected the older beliefs and practices regarding the abode of souls in the West or in the ground or in "that place" from which they come to enter the bodies of infants at birth.<sup>25</sup>

The Iroquois did not take either kindly or willingly to the idea of eternal punishment. That idea was too foreign to his experience.<sup>26</sup> It seems that not until the religious revival under Handsome Lake in the early nineteenth century was the notion of hell as the place of punishment for sinners definitely accepted.

At festivals it became customary, though possibly not before the nineteenth century, to make public confession of sins. But the conception neither of confession nor of sin, judging from the practice, was that of the old Jesuit teachers. Confession meant simply the acknowledgment of contrition. The Indian disliked punishment intensely. The sinner, after confession, expected no punishment here or hereafter. If a man, said they, be truly sorry, says so and promises faithfully to do wrong no more, "Then what more can be expected of him?"

Oral prayer became a part of the regular, public, religious ceremonies, the Great Spirit being thanked for the favors he had shown to his people and asked for continued aid since his people so faithfully carried out his behests.<sup>27</sup> Prayers seem to have been uttered not so much in the spirit of "true Christian humility" as in the spirit, "We have done our duty and respectfully remind you to do yours." It was customary at the conclusion of the regular morning meal for the man to say, "Thanks are given" and for the woman to reply, "It is well." This practice probably was not aboriginal.<sup>28</sup>

Baptism never was adopted. It was black magic, dangerous and filled with malignant power.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> LVII *J. R.* (1672-1673), 117-119; Canfield, 169-171; Converse, 51-52, 56-57; Morgan, I, 245-246.

<sup>26</sup> Boyle, 271.

<sup>27</sup> Morgan, I, bk. ii, chs. I, II, passim; cf. Boyle.

<sup>28</sup> Parker: *Maize*, 61; Converse, 134 note 1; LIII *J. R.* (1669-1670), 265-267.

<sup>29</sup> Donohoe, 122; cf. XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 135.



## HANDSOME LAKE AND THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF MANY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES.

A great man and the birth of a new nation effected changes in the Iroquois religion in the nineteenth century even as the Christian religion had been effecting them during the two centuries preceding. Under these three influences religious practices in the nineteenth century became more definite, regularly recurring and fixed, and at the same time more thoroughly related to the Great Spirit. Between about 1775 and 1815 the Iroquois, long a prized ally both of the English and of the French, found a new nation building and growing, and surrounding their ancient territories and impressing its will upon them. Henceforth war could not be waged, and peace was in the land. Besides, the presence of so many people was making hunting a poor occupation. So the warrior lost his work. Men neither went forth regularly to war nor made a living by hunting. Men had to farm. The old agricultural basis became the very economic center of life, and what had been man's work disappeared or remained simply as a pastime while woman's work became his. Agreskoue now had no reason for continued existence. He disappeared. But the deities of agriculture waxed and grew. With peace, with a settled life and with a definite routine of work centering about the orderly, repetitive tasks of the farmer, there came a definiteness in the recurrence and conduct of religious ceremonies. Just as this change was taking place the effect of the Christian religious forces at work during the preceding two centuries came to a head, in so far as that was possible, in one man who crystallized the beliefs concerning the Great Spirit and gathered the religious ceremonies about him.

Handsome Lake, half brother to Cornplanter, was a Seneca sachem who, having lived the greater part of three score years a life largely dissolute, reformed upon recovering from a dangerous illness and for about two decades until his death in 1815 preached moral reformation upon a religious sanction. While ill, so runs his statement, he had a vision in which he was visited by four angels, emissaries of the Great Spirit. For, according to the Jesuit teaching one communicated with God only through an intermediary. These angels had Handsome Lake accompany them and showed him heaven and hell.

They told him, at the behest of Hawenneyu, to reform his people.<sup>30</sup>

Intemperance beyond all other vices had played obvious and dreadful havoc among the Iroquois.<sup>31</sup> Some feared its inroads would exterminate them altogether. Whatever may be said of Lake's motives and methods, he did endeavor late in life to work a reform and did carry through a successful campaign against drink. Though this was of primary importance in his eyes it was not his sole mission. Mere talk about the necessity of being good would carry little weight, for men had long talked thus. So Lake preached good conduct on the pain of eternal, fearful punishment. In his teachings he perpetuated both the old forms and beliefs and the new ones that had crept in. He powerfully emphasized the religious sanction back of conduct on earth by describing the rewards that Hawenneyu would give the good and by emphasizing the ills that awaited the wicked in the form of dreadful punishment from Hawenneyu. His chief and striking influence was upon morals, and his instrument for improving the morals was the religious belief in the Great Spirit. His preaching bore fruit immediately.

"His (Handsome Lake's) introduction to the Onondaga nation was like this. At the time the whites came among this people they were greatly addicted to the use of ardent spirits, and frequently indulged in it to the most beastly excess. In the year 1790 or '91, while Mr. Webster occupied his trading house at the mouth of Onondaga Creek, eighteen of the principal chiefs and warriors of the Onondagas called on him, stating that they had just set out to attend a great council of the six nations, to be held at Buffalo. As was customary, Mr. Webster produced his bottle, and it was plied with a right good will to the lips of all. Webster was always a special favorite with the Indians, and on this occasion parted with his guests with unusual demonstrations of mutual attachment. In due time, these delegates returned; and as usual the bottle of strong drink was placed before them. To the utter astonishment of Mr. Webster, every man of them refused to touch it. . . . The chiefs explained, that they had met at Buffalo, a PROPHET of the Seneca nation, who had assured them, and in this assurance they had the most implicit confidence, that without

<sup>30</sup> Morgan, I, 217-220; Parker: *Code of Handsome Lake*, 5, 9-13, 19, 21-26.

<sup>31</sup> LVIII *J. R.* (1673-1674), 205; *Doc. Hist. of N. Y.*, II, 592, 627-623, 640, 656, 976, 1107, 1109 and vol. IX, 1043-1044; Parker: *Code*, 9, 10, cf. 17, 18, 20-21.

a total abstinence, from the use of ardent spirits, they and their race would shortly become extinct; that they had entered upon a resolution, never again to taste the baneful article, and that they hoped to be able to prevail on their nation to adopt the same salutary resolution.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1888 a Seneca, speaking of Handsome Lake’s work, described it thus:

“‘The general belief is, one great spirit controls everything; God, he is called in English, he is a supreme power on earth, everything; and then they believe in temperance; that is the most part of their religion, is temperance; and they believe in thanking, mostly, to the Great Spirit, that is the most important thing; most everything they see they thank him; it is their doctrine to be kind to one another, to be good, honest people; and they believe a man is to have only one woman to live with; and they are strict; their doctrine is against marry more than one woman; it commenced about eighty-eight years ago that way; before that we was wild; they would murder one another, and drinking just about that time; there was a great deal of whisky brought for the Indians; and they had terrible times; and then they got up this Indian doctrine; and Handsome Lake he preached to the Indians; he was taken sick, they claimed, and some good things he showed to the people, and everybody adopted right away; after that doctrine everybody was good; everybody was good; and all shaking hands and all feeling good; and that is the starting of this Indian religion. . . .’”<sup>33</sup>

The religious ceremonies of the nineteenth century described by Clark, Morgan, Parker and others owe much for their emphasis upon morals and upon the Great Spirit as the sanction of morality to the teachings of Handsome Lake and his immediate and sole successor, Jimmy Johnson. What Handsome Lake preached is related by Jimmy Johnson in a sermon occupying three mornings.<sup>34</sup> Johnson opened his address with a brief statement of the visit of the four angels to Handsome

<sup>32</sup> Clark: *Onondaga*, I, 105–106; cf. Parker, u. s., 6.

<sup>33</sup> Morgan, II (note 66), 235–236, quoted from *Indian Problem*, II, 1104.

<sup>34</sup> What follows is a summary of the translation of Johnson’s address at a general Condoling Council held at Tonawanda, Oct. 4, 5, 6, 1848. Ely S. Parker who made the translation was thoroughly familiar with the discourse. It is given in full in Morgan, I, 224–248. Cf. E. Johnson: *Legends, Traditions and Laws*, 185–208. Johnson was a Tuscarora chief. His account is similar to that of Morgan. A fine discussion is given in Parker: *Code*, in which the code itself is translated, pages 20–80.

Lake. Following that and as the first of a number of exhortations he pointed out the evils of intemperance and solemnly warned his listeners against the habit. The remainder of the first morning's discourse dealt mainly with family relations. Marriages, said he, as far as possible should be kept faithfully. Hypocrisy and deceit should be shunned. It is a duty to care for orphan children and properly to rear them. All children should be taught morality and reverence for the Creator. As for the marriage relation, adherence must be given to the ancient Iroquois dictum that it is right and meet for a mother to select a suitable match for her child. Once married, the endeavor should be made not to give grounds for divorce. Here Johnson repeated the command that children be taught the old moral virtues of obedience to and respect for their elders, and also that they be taught the duty of obedience to and reverence for the Great Spirit. He pointed out that quarreling between man and wife was wrong and that they should support each other, since quarreling and antagonism between parents were of evil influence upon their children. After telling his listeners that the Great Spirit thought it a great wrong to sell land, to traffic in earth as though it were paltry merchandise, and that consequently the Great Spirit surely would punish the transgressor, Johnson concluded his first day's speech at noon with this remark: "Chiefs, keepers of the faith, warriors, women and children:—You all know that our religion teaches, that the early day is dedicated to the Great Spirit, and that the late day is granted to the spirits of the dead. It is now meridian and I must close."

Taking up his discourse again the following morning Johnson declared that adultery, always a great wrong in Iroquois eyes, was a sin in the eyes of the Great Spirit. Regarding punishments the Creator had declared that the chastisement of children by means of the rod was wrong and that the old method, that of sprinkling water upon the child to be corrected or even of ducking him, was sufficient. The Great Spirit sanctioned all the old festivals and games, and therefore they were to be continued. Then Johnson portrayed what were to be the future punishments meted out by the Great Spirit to all drunkards and inhospitable people, and what were to be the rewards granted to the hospitable. He verbally castigated



those who evinced pride because of their possessions. "All men were made equal by the Great Spirit; but he has given them a variety of gifts. To some a pretty face, to others an ugly one; to some a comely form, to others a deformed figure. Some are fortunate in collecting around them worldly goods. But you are all entitled to the same privileges, and therefore must put pride from among you. You are not your own makers, nor the builders of your own fortunes. All things are the gift of the Great Spirit, and to him must be returned thanks for their bestowal. He alone must be acknowledged as the giver. It has pleased him to make differences among men; but it is wrong for one man to exalt himself above another. Love each other, for you are all brothers and sisters of the same great family." The love of music and the passion for gambling had led the Iroquois to frequent gambling dens and dance halls, to the detriment of his physical and moral health. Johnson told how in the message to Handsome Lake the Great Spirit had urged the maintenance of the old religion and had pronounced, through his four messengers, the fiddle and cards to be temptations set in the path of the Iroquois by the Evil-minded. Consequently indulgence in them was a great sin. In the name of the Creator the Keepers of the Faith were exhorted faithfully to continue the moral instruction of their people. The assembled persons were commanded to speak no evil of one another and to cultivate friendship with those who surrounded them, an act pleasing to the Great Spirit. Thus ended the discourse at noon of the second day.

On the morning of the third day, having called the attention of his hearers to certain omissions, Johnson once more stated the need of perpetuating the old religious ceremonies at the behest of the Great Spirit. Then, in quasi-Dantean fashion, hell and heaven were depicted. Yet the Indian version, so palpably modeled on the theology of white missionaries, was nevertheless Indian in its punishments and in its sarcasm. Johnson solemnly pointed out that witches, murderers and those guilty of infanticide never reach heaven. The people were reminded also that stealing was displeasing to the Great Spirit. The Iroquois mourning customs, as can be gathered easily from the descriptions of them already given, often led to the impoverishment of those concerned and sometimes, be-



cause of their rigors, led to death. Handsome Lake, so keen in his recognition of influences favorable and unfavorable to his people, sought to reform these customs. His success is seen in Johnson's declaration that the custom of mourning for a year was wrong and that it is commanded that the bereaved mourn ten days for the dead and not longer. "The four Messengers further said to Handsome Lake, they were fearful that, unless the people repented and obeyed his commands, the patience and forbearance of their Creator would be exhausted; that he would grow angry with them, and cause their increase to cease." With a statement concerning the final day of reckoning in which the good and the faithful shall go home to their Creator while the wicked shall perish, and with thanks to and a blessing on his listeners, Johnson concluded a remarkable sermon.

This brief synopsis of Johnson's discourse contains three matters of importance, whether looked at from the point of view of the history that lay back of the sermon or from the point of view of the ceremonial and duties that partially flowed from it. In the first place the meat of the discourse is really Indian. The purport of the sermon is to tell people how to act; and the things to be done or not to be done are mainly native. His exhortations regarding marriage, regarding the rearing of children, regarding the duties of parents to each other and to their young, regarding hospitality, friendship, the evils of witchcraft, boasting, defaming persons, pride, thieving, in chastity, prescribe duties known to the Iroquois before the strangers came from over the sea. But there are a few duties that were learned from or imposed by the Whites. The white man gave the Iroquois drink and cards. The virtue of temperance and the viciousness of gambling and dancing were apparent to all observant persons before Lake died. In the second place the reasons given for conducting one's self properly are really Christian. The references to the Creator or Great Spirit, to hell and heaven, to future punishment and a judgment day, to confession and sin and to the duty of thanking the gods are examples of how the contact with the Whites gave a new sanction to the old virtues. Over and above all such considerations the sermon contains in the third place a reiteration of the duty of preserving the old festivals,

dances and games that is made effective because of divine behest. The Great Spirit wants these things done as of old. The regularity and care with which the nineteenth century ceremonies were conducted have been due in large part to the commands of Handsome Lake and Johnson. These men molded the religion of their people whilst their ideas in turn were fashioned partly by beliefs and customs that formerly were held only by the white people. The sermon, then, coming at a time when Iroquois ways of living were changing over from those of a hunting, fishing, agricultural and fighting people to those of a peaceable and farming people, presents a curious mixture of the old and the new. But it presents more than that. It clearly urges what we call a high standard of morality and urges it upon a religious foundation and sanction. The words of the sermon bespeak genuine spirituality in the orator.

#### RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

In the nineteenth century the systematic and steadied economic life, mainly agricultural, that engrossed the attention of more of the social group than ever before, reflected its interest and value for the community in the more elaborate, regular, religious ceremonies. Upon at least six stated occasions during the year festivals were held, each lasting from one to ten days. The regular recurrence of a complicated ceremony necessitated the formation in the tribe of a group with managerial and supervisory powers. These persons were the Keepers of the Faith. It has been seen that in olden days, for example in invoking Agreskoue, some important man, usually one of the elders, took charge of the conduct of affairs. The Keepers of the Faith seem to have been functionally, if not also historically, descendants of these men. Each tribe, Mr. Morgan reports, had some individuals, men and women, who were appointed by the men and women of the clans of the tribe to take charge of the religious festivals. These Keepers of the Faith had no special dress or other distinguishing mark. Except at festivals they differed in no way from their comrades. In fact they held office only so long as they fulfilled their duties, resignation being permitted them at any time, subject to public disapproval if the resignation were thought

to evidence mere shirking. It was they who made all the arrangements with regard to the holidays, arrangements of time, of place, of order of ceremonial, of addresses and so forth. The women Keepers had especial supervision over the provision and conduct of the feast or feasts that capped all such gatherings. In addition to their duties as administrators of the public festivities, and probably because of the preaching and teaching of Handsome Lake, the Keepers had two other duties which gave them something of the position connoted by the name of priest or minister. They were also the official censors, reporting to the council at the religious meeting the misdeeds of members of the community. They themselves made the addresses, both religious and moral. Their work as moral advisers will be touched upon in the next chapter.<sup>35</sup>

One of the primary modes of formal worship was the religious dance, for the Indian danced his worship. It was not play to him. The interpreter, Conrad Weiser, says that he saw some Iroquois dance at Onondaga, in 1745, for three hours or more until the perspiration rolled off them. He wondered that human exertion could be so strenuous for so long a time and marveled at the physical endurance displayed.<sup>36</sup> The dance was sacred. It was "praying with the feet." At all festivals they danced to some deity. It also was a record, for the love of dancing and the desire for it prevented the loss of the deity danced to.

The first of the great festivals was the Maple Dance, held when the sap began to flow and having for its religious object the thanking of the Maple itself for its "sweet waters" and the thanking of the Great Spirit for the gift of the tree and for his kindness to the assembled folk.<sup>37</sup> This festival and all others were preceded by a confession of sins and were marked by dances and feasts. Much time during the religious ceremony was devoted to social enjoyment, the activities being more or less colored by the notion that they were sacred—the dance was sacred or the game was sacred.

<sup>35</sup> Morgan, I, 177-179. See below, p. 85.

<sup>36</sup> *Penna. Magazine of Hist.*, III, 60. Cf. Morgan, *passim*; index p. 318 of vol. II is guide to dances. Clark, I, 62 sq.

<sup>37</sup> Parker: *Code*, gives translation of a Seneca sacred ceremony, 94-100, and an outline of cornplanting and maple thanksgivings, 101-104.

Later in the spring, when the seedlings were about to be planted, a festival was held which was distinguishable from that of the Maple Dance only in that the Great Spirit was thanked for the return of the season and was asked to bless the seed.

Between this festival and the next regular one, if a drought threatened the young plants, a special one was held—an old one—to invoke *Heno*. The address of the Keeper shows how poorly fused Iroquois beliefs and Christian accretions often were. After tobacco had been burned, its incense always being used as a means of communicating with the greater deities, the following was solemnly recited: “He-no, our Grandfather, listen now to the words of thy grandchildren. We feel grieved. Our minds are sorely troubled. We fear Our Supporters (corn, bean, squash) will fail, and bring famine upon us. We ask our Grandfather that he may come, and give us rain, that the earth may not dry up, and refuse to produce for our support. Thy grandchildren all send their salutations to their grandfather, He-no.” To this address was added a prayer to the Great Spirit in which he was asked to “Direct that He-no may come, and give us rain, that Our Supporters may not fail us, and bring famine to our home.”<sup>38</sup>

When the berries were ripe a festival similar to the two regular festivals mentioned, was held. The chief feature was the feast.

The most important religious ceremonies were the last three, connected with the ripening of the corn, the harvesting of the crops and the ushering in of the new year in February. Since the primary vegetable food was corn, with its sisters the bean and the squash, the ripening of these marked the time of abundance. The occasion was one for feasting and rejoicing. The *Green Corn Festival* lasted four days, each having its distinguishing activities and every one concluding with a feast. The first day

<sup>38</sup> Morgan, I, 189. The account of festivals, in the text, is based largely upon Morgan, I, bk. ii, ch. II. Morgan had the confidence of the Iroquois and was a Seneca by adoption; his accounts of the festivals as actually conducted are reliable for they are based either upon personal observations in the middle of the nineteenth century or upon descriptions by Ely Parker, himself a full-blooded Seneca, well educated, intelligent and a Brigadier-General and former private secretary to General Grant.



was marked by speeches, by the performance, in addition to several other dances, of the special dance to the Great Spirit, the Feather Dance, and by an address to the Great Spirit. On the second day addresses were made again and the Thanksgiving Dance was given. The latter was similar to the Feather Dance and like it was performed by a select band. This day also was marked by a series of very short speeches not to Hawenneyu alone but to various phenomena, mainly natural. The third day was distinguished by a thanksgiving concert in which were sung thanks to and praises of all natural objects. On the fourth day the old peach-stone game was played. The chief religious element in the festival was the Thanksgiving Dance of the second day and the accompanying addresses. A series of two minute dances was performed to the music of thanksgiving songs and shell rattles, and after each dance one of the following sentences was recited until this list was run through:

"We return thanks to our mother, the earth, which sustains us.

"We return thanks to the rivers and streams, which supply us with water.

"We return thanks to all the herbs, which furnish medicines for the cure of our diseases.

"We return thanks to the corn, and to her sisters, the beans and squashes, which give us life.

"We return thanks to the bushes and trees, which provide us with fruit.

"We return thanks to the wind, which, moving the air, has banished diseases.

"We return thanks to the moon and stars, which have given us their light when the sun was gone.

"We return thanks to our grandfather Heno, that he has protected his grandchildren from witches and reptiles, and has given to us his rain.

"We return thanks to the sun, that he has looked upon the earth with a beneficent eye.

"Lastly, we return thanks to the Great Spirit, in whom is embodied all goodness, and who directs all things for the good of his children."<sup>39</sup>

The fifth regular festival and the last so closely connected with agricultural interests was the Thanksgiving to Our Supporters, held for four days after the harvest had been made. The festival resembled closely the Green Corn Festival and

<sup>39</sup> Morgan, I, 194-195.

had for its especial object the thanking of those inseparables, the corn, bean and squash, together with the triad of spirits that cared for them. "These religious councils were seasons of animation and excitement. The greater activity in social intercourse among the people, generally awakened by these ceremonies and feastivities, contributed largely to keep up the spirit of these occasions."<sup>40</sup>

The New Year's Festival, the most important and longest of the Iroquois religious ceremonies, is related directly to the White Dog Feast and the more ancient Dream Feast, being held at the same season of the year and including the same sort of activities. The ceremony, commencing about the first of February, usually lasted seven days. Confession before the beginning of this ceremony was more thorough than on any other occasion. The central object seems to have been the burning of the dog or dogs. All the sins of the people had been collected and concentrated in the Keepers of the Faith who "by some peculiar manoeuvring" transferred them to two individuals who in turn "by some peculiar ceremony" worked them off into the strangled dog.<sup>41</sup> The creature was strangled on the first day, this method of killing being employed to prevent bloodshed since the spilling of a drop of blood nullified the whole proceeding. Then the paint, feathers and, in recent times, the ribbons which pious persons had given in order to receive blessings, were put on the dog. Thus decorated, it was hung some eight feet in the air on a pole. There it remained until burned on the fifth day. The second, third and fourth days were passed in ways reminiscent of the seventeenth century and of the account of the Dream Feast witnessed by Fathers Dablon and Chaumonot.<sup>42</sup> Formal visits were made; dances were performed; gifts were collected, even legitimately stolen, for the feast; persons masqueraded; dreams were guessed and solemnly fulfilled; games were

<sup>40</sup> *Ib.*, 198.

<sup>41</sup> Clark, 59. Morgan, Boyle and others fail to mention this fact which Clark says he saw. They regard the dog simply as a means of communicating with the Great Spirit. Usage may have differed for Morgan wrote of his observations chiefly among the Senecas, Boyle of later Canadian Iroquois and Clark of mid-nineteenth century Onondagas.

<sup>42</sup> See pp. 36-39.

played. "In this manner every house was made a scene of gaiety and amusement, for none was so humble or so retired as to remain unvisited."<sup>43</sup> On the early morning of the fifth day the white dog was burned on a wood pyre. This ceremonial burning was preceded by a speech of thanksgiving, after which a solemn procession bore the dog to the fire and the Great Spirit was invoked. A long religious address was made, the body of which was like the address given topic by topic just above in connection with the Green Corn Festival. The introduction, however, consisted of an invocation of Hawenneyu requesting him to make his people steadfast in the performance of duties.<sup>44</sup> In contrast with this long address given at the Seneca ceremony it is interesting to compare the brief one used by the Canadian Iroquois.

"We ask that the sun will continue to shine on us and make all things grow.

"We ask that the moon may always give us light by night.

"We ask that the clouds may never cease to give us rain and snow.

"We ask that the winds may always blow.

"We ask that the trees and plants may always grow.

"We ask that Thou (Great Spirit) would send all sorts of animals for food and clothing, and make the birds increase in number."<sup>45</sup>

The religious exercises of the sixth day were concluded by the Feather Dance, though other dances were performed and the usual feast consumed. The seventh and last day was given over to a thanksgiving concert and to the playing of the peach-stone game.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, I, 204.

<sup>44</sup> *Ib.*, 210-213; Parker: *Code*, 85-94, being the translation of the Seneca prayer as recorded on the Cattaraugus Reservation in February, 1906.

<sup>45</sup> Boyle, 267.

<sup>46</sup> Morgan's account is of the Senecas of the fifth decade of the last century. Clark describes what he saw at Onondaga at the opening of the same decade (I, 55-62). He says that the ceremony was completed by a War Dance. The brief account given by Boyle for the Canadian Iroquois just before 1900 should be compared with Hale's statement of what he saw and heard among them some twenty years after Morgan's account was written (*Am. A. and O. Jour.*, VII, 7-14). Beauchamp recounts what Albert Cusick told him of the feast among the Onondagas (*Jour. Am. F.-L.*, I, 198-199). Parker: *Code*, 81-85, contains an account of the festival at Newtown, Cattaraugus Reservation, January, 1905.

## GENERAL SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES.

From a consideration of the things religious that the Iroquois took over from the Whites, much of it being palpably imitation of Christian ways and words, it is to be seen that fundamentally the Iroquois was little affected; that which he did take were largely the superficialities, the outward signs of Christianity. The depths of its thought were not plumbed by him. The idea of atonement, for instance, was not understood, so that Iroquois confession was never Christian. The central rite of Christianity, the communion, was never taken over by the pagan Iroquois. The prayers quoted in connection with the festivals show how the older spirits remained and functioned and how the Great Spirit was simply added to the host of deities already existing. The labors of Handsome Lake made the Great Spirit superior to and ruler over all spirits. That the Iroquois so easily accepted the notion that his good conduct was sanctioned and his bad conduct was disapproved by religion, is explicable by the native situation. The fact that his conduct ordinarily was bound up somehow with his gods, that he knew that he and his gods always had been interested in each other's conduct, made it possible for him, when he was led to make some distinction between what are called morality and religion, to comprehend and to accept the teaching of the missionary that there is a deity who oversees all men's thoughts and actions. With this belief could come a notion of sin and the adoption of a heaven that was a different place from the realms of Jouskeha and Atahentsic. These gods, along with Agreskoue, faded and disappeared; Tarenyawagon became less important and dreams became somewhat less commanding. But while the greater deities were suffering largely because they were so near the exalted Great Spirit, the minor spirits with their many earthly duties that demanded daily attention, bowed acknowledgment to the Great Spirit and persisted along with their work.



## CHAPTER IV.

### IROQUOIS MORALITY AND ITS RELATION TO THEIR RELIGION.

#### DEFINITION AND REMARKS.

THE Iroquois conception of moral conduct was conditioned largely by the fact that they formed a relatively small kin-group whose members dwelt in a but slightly artificial environment and lived lives fraught with danger whether from other men and animals or from disease, famine and such other ills as appear in a society hampered by the fewness of invented and discovered, physical and intellectual aids to human endeavor. To them right was that which tradition, custom and accepted ways of doing things prescribed, and wrong was the failure to do as tradition, custom and accepted ways of acting demanded. Their morals are to be defined as those motives, notions and particularly those modes of intercourse and action which the community approved of as right or disapproved of as wrong.

In order to determine the extent of the relations between Iroquois religion and morality it will be necessary not only to note the religious content discernible in some forms of moral conduct and the significance of religious belief and practice for morality, but also to observe what modes of ethical action were independent of religion. Such distinctions of course can not always be made, for the native neither thought of nor conformed his acts to them. In connection with the Iroquois the subject is complicated further by the accident of America's discovery and its occupation by Europeans. Because of that occupation it can not be asked simply: To what extent and how were religious influences at work at various times throughout the few centuries under examination? For the question frequently arises: Is the practice native? If influenced by contact with the Whites, to what extent and in what way has it been affected?

## THE MORALITY OF IROQUOIS RELIGION.

It is a matter of course that since Iroquois religious conduct and thought were approved by the community they were also moral conduct and thought. Two general comments on their religion from the standpoint of their ethics are worth making. In the first place it happened that among the Iroquois religion did not hinder to any great extent the conduct of political, economic and social life by encumbering that life with many requirements of time, energy and things. A re-examination of the religious practices already described shows that either because of the time when such demands were made or because of the nature and amount of the demands, the time and energy and things given over to religious uses could have been but of slight consequence in the development of political, economic and social affairs. Those acquainted with the life of savages in many parts of the world or even with ancient civilizations may wonder whether this generalization concerning the Iroquois be not false because of the rôle of the taboo which so often elsewhere and in ancient times hampered practical action or actually forbade it or the use of an implement best fitted to effect some practical end. The reader of the history of the Iroquois is surprised to find how rarely taboos interfered with their conduct of mundane affairs. The Iroquois, he learns, appear never to have had prohibitions against adopting such valuable foreign articles as guns or knives or cloth. Moreover he notes that often the taboo was helpful in the work of daily life. It was advantageous to have a powerful taboo upon story-telling during the busy summer-time. During the initiation ceremony the taboos aided in strengthening the religious emotion that did so much to give significance and value to that ceremony. A taboo might have a distinctly ethical tendency. The injunction that the bones of valuable animals must be handled with circumspection and kept from dogs was conducive to the creation of a respectful attitude. It is true that the records sometimes mention that fear for the consequences of some act which is observed frequently in other parts of the world and which appears to be due rather to magical than to religious belief. The Jesuits refer all too casually to the Iroquois fear of baptism or of telling their personal names, knowledge of which would give the Jesuit power to cause the

death of the man.<sup>1</sup> But such references whether in myths or in other records are so scanty that it is impossible to tell to what extent that type of belief and the taboos following from it, existed. This lack of evidence certainly is an indication that in the period under review the Iroquois were not influenced on a great scale in their daily life by that type of taboo. Of even greater significance is the fact that the Iroquois himself could see the practical evil that flowed from some ancient custom and could overcome it. A notable illustration is derived from the history of the Feast of the Dead. In the eighteenth century the extravagant giving and the reckless distribution of valuable furs and other articles were wasteful and impoverishing, and were recognized as such. Handsome Lake preached against this lavishment, called upon the Great Spirit to aid him and brought about the abolition of the old elaborate feast. It does seem true, therefore, that, whatever the reason may be, the Iroquois religion in the last few centuries in fact did not interfere noticeably with conduct in the secular world.

In the second place, among the Iroquois religion was clearly of tremendous significance as a valuating agency and as a sanction. In this life it cast the spell of the sacred over the great needs of the workaday world so that secular demands became also spiritual and were met and striven for more hopefully. What are to us non-religious acts frequently were performed in a religious "frame of mind" and that attitude increased the importance of those acts. Its evocation often in meeting secular demands helps to explain the frequency with which the religious sanction was used to make obligatory essentially non-religious conduct. Those forms of conduct, for example, which are demanded nowadays for political, legal or military reasons or because conscience or custom sanctions them were forms usually sanctioned among the Iroquois by religion. In fact, as has been said, the religious was the most effective and the most widely used of Iroquois sanctions. This difference of the Iroquois from us is accentuated further by the fact that, on the other hand, such matters as marriages and chastity, truthfulness and other virtues which among us are sanctioned gen-

<sup>1</sup> XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 135; XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), 309-311. On personal names cf. Goldenweiser (1912), 469-470; (1913), 366-368.

erally by religion, among the Iroquois were subject rather to the sanction of custom and public opinion. These generalizations will enter into subsequent discussion.

#### RELIGION AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

A great political function and the first one that a young man participated in was the initiation ceremony at puberty. Yet the religious predominated. The youth needed purification and he cleansed himself by the performance of unusual acts in some lonesome spot. These acts attuned him to the spiritual. His dream came and he received his guardian and charm. In fact, although the object was the practical one of inducting him into the position of a man, so important a part did religious conduct play that the whole ceremony may be called religious. Religious ceremony pointed out the path he was to take in life, gave him a guardian genius as a religious aid in the crises of life and imbued him with that confidence in life which must come from the knowledge of the possession of a personal *oki* and the actual ownership of its symbolic charm in skin, knife or feather. Moreover, it was the religious ceremony that was used to make the youth realize, mayhap hazily, both the importance of and the responsibility attached to his attainment of manhood.<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted in passing that it was this association of religion with dreams that gave the great value to certain dreams and things dreamed. Religion was the supreme evaluating agency, the dream often was both astonishing and impressive; association of the two appears to have been a natural consequence, particularly when some spirit was involved in the dream. Once that association was made, the dream, especially the "supernatural" dream, could become so important that belief therein would be unshakable. One does not wonder, therefore, that the Jesuits complained that the greatest obstacle to conversion was the Iroquois faith in dreams.

A second great political function was the Condoling Cere-

<sup>2</sup> This religious aspect of guardian spirits was widespread among many Indian tribes of North America. It has been diminishing among the Iroquois, but there is no reason to believe that it was not true for them. It is a characteristic religious phenomenon of the North American Indians.



mony. It was also in part a religious ceremony. Several writers have described this council at length so that an additional description may be omitted.<sup>3</sup> Although the occasion was that of the death of one and the choice of a succeeding political officer—either a lord, peace-chief or sachem, or, when needed, a deputy, assistant or war chief—in the eyes of the performers this political ceremony was also religious. The use of phrases and cries similar to those employed in burial ceremonies<sup>4</sup> and of the Karemma or sacred hymn,<sup>5</sup> the taboo on certain times of performance as dangerous to crops,<sup>6</sup> the danger that came if before burial the horns, symbolic of sachemship, were not removed from the head of the dead chief,<sup>7</sup> even the use of phrases whose meaning no longer was known to the speaker,<sup>8</sup> are signs of the penetration of this political ceremony by religion. Furthermore, the solemnity, the grief and the appeal for aid to the Founders of the League as to divine powers, indicate that the attitude was not merely a secular one but was also religious. The value of it all in the eyes of the participants was not simply the value that attached to mundane things. There was an awfulness, a sacredness, a supreme value about it all that only religion could give.

Yet the actual choice of a sachem was not governed by any religious consideration. It was laid down<sup>9</sup> that the title rested with the same family and clan to which belonged the members

<sup>3</sup> Scott: *Deganawida Myth*. Hale: *Book of Rites*. Scott, pp. 237–246, reprints a translation of a part of the condoling rites given in original and translation by Hale, pp. 117–139. The former also translates the words of an introductory ceremony to the Condolence, pp. 234–237, that is not to be found in Hale.

Hale: "Iroquois Condoling Council," in *Trans. Royal Soc. Canada*, 2d ser., I (1895–1896), Section II, 45–65.

Parker: *Constitution of the Five Nations*. Introductory ceremony mentioned above is given also by Parker, pp. 110 sq.

Morgan, I, 59–71, 83–84, 109–116.

Chadwick: *People of the Long House*, 32–53.

Beauchamp: *Religious and Mourning Councils*, N. Y. S. M. Bull. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Hewitt offers an explanation of the origin of the cry used in the Condolence. Cf. *Am. Anthr.*, XI, 286–287.

<sup>5</sup> Hale: *Rites*, 123; cf. 62–64. Hewitt, *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., IV, 35–41.

<sup>6</sup> Hewitt, *ib.*, 33–34.

<sup>7</sup> Scott, 234; cf. Parker, u. s., 109.

<sup>8</sup> Hale: *Rites*, 64.

<sup>9</sup> Scott, 232–233; cf. Parker, 39–44; Goldenweiser (1912), 468.

of the first confederate council and that a nominee was to be named by the women of that family and clan, the Chief Matron being spokesman. When a vacancy occurred because of the deposition of a lord, the Chief Matron of his family and clan named another warrior of her family and clan as the successor and crowned him with the deer's horns. That simple act made him a sachem; no further ceremony was required. But if a vacancy occurred because of the death of a lord or sachem, the successor was chosen in a different manner. The Chief Matron and the warriors of the family and clan of the deceased nominated another lord from the warriors of the family and clan of the dead sachem, and the nomination was submitted to the lords of the phratry of the deceased. If they confirmed it the matter was submitted for further confirmation first to the other phratry of that clan and then to the corresponding phratries in Confederate Council assembled. It was after this procedure that the candidate went through the Condolence Ceremony. If a title was threatened with extinction because of the death of the last member of the family and clan to which the title belonged, it reverted to the Confederate Council which appointed a successor from any family of the phratry of the deceased sachem. They could invest the title in that family there to remain as long as they were satisfied. Finally, if the Chief Matron of a family and clan in which a lordship title was vested, died and left females too young to nominate candidates, the lords of the tribe undertook that office until in their opinion and upon the request of the heirs, the females were old enough to undertake properly the making of nominations. So in no case was religion called upon to aid in choosing a new sachem or a war chief. It was when dealing not with the new lord but with him who just had died that religion figured as described. Even in the choice of that third type, the Pine-Tree Chief, religion did not enter. For the Deganawida Myth states simply that if a warrior were found to be wise and trustworthy and if he were a person who helped his people and therefore aided the Confederacy, the lords could acclaim him publicly and confer upon him the title of Self-Made or Second Chief,<sup>10</sup> the title to hold only during his life time.

<sup>10</sup> Scott, 233; Parker, 41; cf. Converse, 54-56.

In all important councils—the Deganawida Myth made it mandatory for all Confederate Councils—a chant or prayer preceded and concluded the consideration of business.<sup>11</sup> No other religious practices, except those referred to in connection with the Condolence, were connected with political councils. The rôle of the religious in political affairs was not fixed. Two extremes may be recognized. The puberty ceremony, which was an individual and not a conciliar matter, although it was an admission-to-citizenship ceremony was nevertheless a religious ceremony throughout. On the other hand religious play in ordinary councils probably was nil. The prayers, being customary, may have had as little force as those that open meetings of our legislative bodies. The Condolence is intermediate since in dealing with the dead it was religious but in dealing with the living it was secular.

#### RELIGION AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS.

The Iroquois religion since at least the time of Handsome Lake was concerned largely with food-getting activities. With the exception of some minor practices<sup>12</sup> the religious rites connected with economic life have been stated, and from the descriptions it is plain that Iroquois religion interfered little with the actual work of food procurance. The women may have danced to the Three Sisters, but they nevertheless carefully tended to the crops themselves and did not leave them entirely to the care of the Sisters. John Obadiah may have weakened himself by fasting and by drinking as an emetic the liquid of boiled green osiers before he went a-hunting, but this apparently unrelated means did give him an amount of confidence that went far toward bringing him his deer.<sup>13</sup> Another interesting illustration is the reason given by the Iroquois for not making a practice of telling stories in the summer-time. Many myths dealt with spirits and had a quasi-sacred char-

<sup>11</sup> Morgan, I, 105; Chadwick, 49; Hale, 62.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Converse: 34, note 3, on sun and moon dances; 63, note 3, on society of women that propitiated the Three Sisters; 66, on blessing of fields at planting time; 101, note 1, on propitiation of dwarf stone-givers.

<sup>13</sup> Beauchamp: *Iroquois Trail*, 92. Cusick gives an account of hunting customs on pp. 34-35 and Beauchamp comments upon them, pp. 91-92, 112.

acter which revealed itself in the religious "tone of mind" of the narrator. Everyone knew that the spirits hibernated in the winter. Legends therefore could be told safely only in the winter-time, for in the summer the spirits were about and were listening and might be offended at what was said or might become so interested that they would neglect their duties. This explanation hints at a more practical one of why these entrancing myths could be related properly only during the weary, time-dragging and bleak winter season and not during the summer with its fighting, fishing and farming demands.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, although religious festivals had to be performed in connection with planting, harvesting and other farm activities, the fact that the number of festivals was small, that generally they lasted but a few days and were performed before or after the particular economic labor itself, brought it about that actual work hardly was interfered with. Furthermore, religion did not forbid good ways of supplying economic wants. No mention is made anywhere, for example, of an objection on religious grounds to the use of the white man's plow or spade. The Iroquois was free to employ the best means she and he could find to supply food.

On the other hand, by means of the performance of the intermediary, indirectly related religious ceremonies, men and women were filled with the confidence that meant much for the successful outcome of the practical, economic activities. Religion entered economic life not simply by tying together daily labor and such religious beliefs and practices as have been described, but also by calling forth a religious attitude toward the workaday world that enhanced the value of the work. This fact is more true probably for the nineteenth century than for the two or three centuries immediately preceding. For prior to the days of Handsome Lake most of the religious ceremonies apparently were not performed at stated times and for stated purposes, but seem to have been performed when a particular crisis such as a famine or a death or a war demanded it. But during the past century the major ceremonies were standardized and were performed regularly in connection with food-getting activities; they consequently by the repetitive, habitual

<sup>14</sup> Schoolcraft: *Myth of Hiawatha*, p. xxiii; Converse, 10-11 and the delightful paragraph, 106-107.



appeal to the feeling of the holy, threw an atmosphere of sacredness about economic duties and acts which could not have been evoked solely by these duties and acts; these forthwith became even more valuable and more necessary than they had been heretofore. There was a reciprocal relation. The increased importance of the farming life since the days of Handsome Lake drew special attention to the religious ceremonies that aided farming, and the ceremonies in turn increased the value of that basic, economic activity. An illustration of this interplay is found in the history of the rôle of religion in the raising of corn, beans and squashes. If the lack of mention be a proof, the Three Sisters were unimportant before Handsome Lake's time and before the change from a hunting, fighting life to a farming life. But in the nineteenth century, under the new conditions already described, agriculture was recognized as the chief occupation; and the corn, beans and squash were the chief agricultural products. The Three Sisters consequently attracted more attention; they enter definitely into at least two of the half-dozen great religious festivals that had as a purpose the assurance of a sufficient food supply. The religious ceremony could be as much a means of economic production as a digging stick.<sup>15</sup>

But all economic life was not so affected. A review of property ownership, for instance, shows a lack of religious influence. The forms of labor and the means of production employed by the Iroquois make it certain that property was limited in amount and in diversity. In its entirety it consisted of "planting lots, orchards, houses, implements of the chase, weapons, articles of apparel, domestic utensils, personal ornaments, stores of grain, skins of animals, and those miscellaneous fabrics which the necessities of life had led them to

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Clark Wissler: "The Functions of Primitive Ritualistic Ceremonies," *Pop. Sci. Monthly*, LXXXVII (Aug., 1915), 200-203. He says that, lacking writing, ceremonial became for the Indian a vehicle for preserving what was learned from experiment. "A ritualistic ceremony in primitive life . . . is an expression of a specific series of procedures so dressed and arranged as to hold the interest, emotions and retentive activities of men. Its primary function is to perpetuate exact knowledge and to secure precision in its application" (p. 203). From what is said in the text it is plain that Wissler's explanation of the function of a ritual is very incomplete and that other causes also give rise to the use of ritualistic ceremony.

invent.”<sup>16</sup> But “the individual owned, to use a convenient measure, only what he could carry with him . . . As a member of the house, clan or tribe, he had a special property in other chattels and in land so long as he was in possession and use thereof as a member of the community. But when this relation ended, his rights ended also.”<sup>17</sup> Since husband and wife remained members of the clan into which each had been born, the property rights of each continued distinct after marriage. But this statement is not to be construed as forbidding the transfer of property. The clan owned the dwelling of the household, the general chattels therein as well as the persons, and such results of personal labor, invention or discovery as trophies, cures, game and other food. This generalization must not be interpreted too strictly since at times the Iroquois himself did not make clear-cut distinctions. The tribe was the possessor of the tribal territory it occupied. As such it controlled the hunting, fishing and trading rights within that territory and also these rights of tribal members when exercised without that territory. Such other chattels as wampum, slaves, council-house and so forth belonged to the tribe if they did not belong to the clan or household. There was also a restricted communism for, with some limitations, food was common. That fact is to be expected since the Iroquois lacked means of preserving, buying and selling food. Nevertheless there was a disparity in wealth. When one of the Fathers, who had baptized a young Seneca woman in 1669, attempted to console the mother upon the subsequent death of the daughter, he was met with the reply, “Thou dost not understand. She was a mistress here, and had at her command more than twenty slaves, who are still with me. She never knew what it was to go to the forest to bring wood, or to the river to draw water. She knew nothing about housekeeping.” Hence, troubled as to the lot of her daughter in the land of souls, the mother urged that a sick slave be baptized, intrusted and killed so that she could follow and care for the daughter.<sup>18</sup> This brief outline is sufficient to indicate that religion had little to do with the evaluation and distribution of property. It may

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, I, 317.

<sup>17</sup> *Ib.*, II (note 101), 272 sq.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. LIV *J. R.* (1669-1670), 93-95.

have enhanced the value of such objects as tobacco, corn, game, medicinal herbs, sundry stones and so forth, because the acquisition of them was sometimes dependent in part upon the use of religious means or because they played a part in religious ritual. But on the whole religious influences were missing in this institution. Property did not attract much attention to itself.

#### RELIGION AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

Similarly, matters of family relationships in the household group, the "face-to-face" relations, were so matter of course that they rarely provoked thought about themselves and therefore did not provoke the religious attitude. Such social facts as the household-group, clan and tribal ties and relationships were not viewed religiously. The presence, however, of that will-o'-the-wisp the totem suggests the guess that in centuries long gone the notion of kinship and the religious attitude somehow were connected.<sup>19</sup> The only definite religious influence in social life before the coming of the Europeans was the negative or restrictive influence of taboos, and these, as preceding remarks indicated, were few.

Among the Iroquois the union of two individuals in marriage was a simple matter. A full-grown man needed but to have his proposal accepted by a woman and marriage was contracted. Mothers frequently arranged the marriage of their children, often without the knowledge of those whose union was contemplated. But the mothers were not necessarily arbitrary, for at harvests and such other times as threw young people together the elders studied probable matches. Orphans could contract marriage themselves. Limitations were few. No marriage could be contracted lawfully between members of the same clan, the exogamous rule being commanding and binding. Marriages were monogamous. The average hunter could not provide meat for several wives. It will be recalled, however, that if the wife would not or could not accompany her husband on trips he could take with him a captive or a "free woman." Incontinence on the part of unmarried women was not wrong, but a wife must maintain faith with her husband at all times, else she surely will bring bad luck and mis-

<sup>19</sup> Goldenweiser (1912), 465-467; (1913), 369-372.

fortune upon him. Nevertheless sex irregularity seems not to have been uncommon but was not so rampant as some writers aver. It appears to have been natural rather than vicious.<sup>20</sup> The occasions upon which men ought to avoid women have been stated (p. 49). Divorce was unrestrained and continued to be of frequent occurrence despite Handsome Lake's injunctions. A quarrel was sufficient cause for separation.

The education of children was mainly in the hands of the mother and her kin. The child had impressed upon it that existence depended upon a great, good and benevolent spirit who gave life and the maintenance of it, and who expected in return grateful worship and the "doing that which is pleasing in his sight." They were taught to look to their elders for information and example of how to act and always to be kind to the aged and the infirm; they themselves, in consequence, would be treated kindly in old age. Children were warned that there were good and bad acts, and that although they could act as they pleased, "Good acts are pleasing to the good Spirit which gave them their existence, and . . . on the contrary, all that is bad proceeds from the bad spirit who has given them nothing, and who cannot give them anything that is good, because he has it not, and therefore he envies them that which they have received from the good Spirit. . . ." For the enforcement of these teachings the obedient child was rewarded with praise from his elders, while the disobedient one saw only sorrowful faces round about him. If the recalcitrant

<sup>20</sup> Regarding social ties, see Ch. I, 18 sq. and notes thereto. Regarding sex relations of all kinds see

La Hontan, II, 451-464 and Lafitau's criticism, *Mocurs*, I, 583-584.

Bacqueville de La Potherie, III, 13-15, 18-20.

Lafitau: *Mocurs*, I, 564-566, 577-580, 599; II, 163-164.

Charlevoix: *Voyage*, I, 178; II, 36-43.

Heckewelder, ch. XVI.

XXXI *J. R.* (1647), 83; XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 141; XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), 265; LI *J. R.* (1666-1668), 125; LVII *J. R.* (1672-1673), 135; LVIII *J. R.* (1673-1674), 205.

Converse, 135-138.

Stites, 27, 31, 38, 71, 85-95.

Parker: *Maize*, 22-24, 31; *Constitution*, 123-125.

Mrs. Smith, 90-92.

Morgan, II (note 103), 274-277.

Goldenweiser (1912), 464 sq.; (1913), 366 sq.



child persisted in his misconduct, condign punishment was visited upon him in the form of water which was sprinkled or thrown over him. Corporal punishment, confinement and similar severe remedies were not used.<sup>21</sup> Such was the account given by Heckewelder who spent about a half-century among the Indians of our central East during the life-time of Handsome Lake. His description of later eighteenth century education contains a combination of ancient moral rules, religious ideas and a general religious sanction that was in great part if not wholly Christian. The precepts themselves are native. The punishments are native. But the admonition to show gratitude to the Giver of Life, to act in accordance with his wishes and to avoid the influence of the Evil One, is a Christian turn. The sanction, by the Great Spirit, of good conduct in general as over against bad conduct, resulted from Christian teaching. Beside this newer incentive stood that older incentive to good conduct, the power of the word of the elders and the promise of similar treatment at the hands of the generation to come. It may be asserted that the education of children, such as it was, was not influenced by religion until missionary teaching made itself felt, and then the influence was mainly as a sanction for old ways of rearing the young.

From remarks made at various times it is seen that the position of women was anything but degrading. It has been stated that women had charge of the household, could own property even when married, played an important part in religious and political affairs, shared the responsibilities of providing food for the community, arranged marriages and educated the little children. To these rights may be added the fact that women had the right to send men to war and to try to bring about peace when war existed. As mothers of posterity they were valued more highly than men. The composition for the killing of a woman was twice that demanded for the killing of a man. Notwithstanding the possession of so many political, social, religious and economic rights women were regarded by the men and by themselves as being somehow inferior to men.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Heckewelder, 113-116. Cf. Lafitau, I, 599; Charlevoix, u.s., II, 23, 24; Loskiel, Pt. I, ch. V; Bacqueville, III, 16-17; Parker: *Code of Handsome Lake*, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Beauchamp: "Iroquois Women," *Jour. Am. F.-L.*, XIII, 81-91, 281; Converse, 135-138; Goldenweiser (1912), 468-469.

## RELIGION AND SOME MISCELLANEOUS INSTITUTIONS.

The Keepers of the Faith who arranged religious festivals were also teachers of morals.<sup>23</sup> As instructed by Handsome Lake, these persons urged the people to live in peace and harmony, to avoid evil speaking, to be hospitable and charitable and to treat orphans kindly, because the Great Spirit rewarded the doers of good. They taught too that wrongdoers should not be treated harshly, and that one should not make enemies since that kindled the spirit of revenge. It seems sure that this moral function of the Keepers and the sanction used are not much more than a century old, and that the origin of both function and sanction may be traced to the changed conditions that resulted from the formation of the United States and the teachings of Handsome Lake and the missionaries before him. Most, perhaps all, of the moral precepts themselves were aboriginal.

The moral influence of the dance was attested by Morgan.

"With the Iroquois, as with the red race at large, dancing was not only regarded as a thanksgiving ceremonial, in itself acceptable to the Great Spirit, but they were taught to consider it a divine art, designed by Ha-wen-ne-yu for their pleasure, as well as for his worship. It was cherished as one of the most suitable modes of social intercourse between the sexes, but more especially as the great instrumentality for arousing patriotic excitement, and for keeping alive the spirit of the nation. The popular enthusiasm broke forth in this form, and was nourished and stimulated by this powerful agency. . . . The first stir of feeling of which the Indian youth was conscious was enkindled by the dance; the first impulse of patriotism, the earliest dreams of ambition were awakened by their (sic) influences. . . . It was more in the nature of a spell upon the people than of a rational guiding spirit."<sup>24</sup>

Charlevoix, in speaking of Indians generally, described the fasts, dreams, dances, songs, feasts and the conduct of medicine men that go to make up the preparation for war.<sup>25</sup> While on the one hand these now decadent practices were performed in order to raise the warriors to fighting pitch, to work them up by strenuous physical activity and to "do something" to

<sup>23</sup> Parker: *Constitution*, 56; Morgan, I, 177-179.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, I, 249-250.

<sup>25</sup> *Voyage*, I, 177-178, 186-195, 210-215. Cf. Loskiel, Pt. I, 141-159 (ch. XI); Lafitau, II, 162-199, 243-246, 248-257, 260-325; Colden, I, passim.

ease the nervous tension under stress of war excitement with the dangers and tortures and deaths of war, on the other hand the religious attitude underlay and largely caused the activities. For by fasting the mind was prepared for the dreams that Tarenyawagon would send, and these would foreshadow victory or defeat, the very central consideration. The medicine men would diminish risks by enlisting the aid of Agreskoue through the use of dances and songs. With risks diminished, with divine aid assured, the victory could not be in doubt. Religious ceremonial, like the arrow, was a means to this end.

Hospitality well may be denominated the cardinal attractive practice of the Iroquois. Morgan with his customary enthusiastic appreciation of the finer side of Iroquois life, painted an alluring picture.

"Perhaps no people ever carried this principle to the same degree of universality, as did the Iroquois. Their houses were not only open to each other, at all hours of the day and of the night, but also to the wayfarer and the stranger. Such entertainment as their means afforded was freely spread before him, with words of kindness and of welcome. . . . If a neighbor or a stranger entered her dwelling, a dish of hommony, or whatever else she had prepared, was immediately placed before him, with an invitation to partake. It made no difference at what hour of the day, or how numerous the calls, this courtesy was extended to every comer, and was the first act of attention bestowed. This custom was universal, in fact one of the laws of their social system; and a neglect on the part of the wife to observe it, was regarded both as a breach of hospitality, and as a personal affront. A neighbor, or a stranger, calling from house to house, through an Indian village, would be thus entertained at every dwelling he entered. If the appetite of the guest had thus been fully satisfied, he was yet bound in courtesy to taste of the dish presented, and to return the customary acknowledgment. . . . 'I thank you;' an omission to do either being esteemed a violation of the usages of life. A stranger would be thus entertained without charge, as long as he was pleased to remain; and a relation was entitled to a home among any of his kindred, while he was disposed to claim it. Under the operation of such a simple and universal law of hospitality, hunger and destitution were entirely unknown among them."<sup>26</sup>

Le Jeune wrote that

"No Hospitals are needed among them, because there are neither mendicants nor paupers as long as there are any rich people among

<sup>26</sup> I, 318-319. Cf. Clark, I, 95-96; Parker: *Maize*, 61-65.

them. Their kindness, humanity, and courtesy not only make them liberal with what they have, but cause them to possess hardly anything except in common. A whole village must be without corn, before any individual can be obliged to endure privation. They divide the produce of their fisheries equally with all who come; and the only reproach they address to us (Jesuit missionaries among the Iroquois) is our hesitation to send to them oftener for our supply of provisions."<sup>27</sup>

In Morgan's account a Christian influence is plain. At least since the days of Handsome Lake hospitality was enjoined by the Great Spirit. He had made all and had given everything for the many and not for the few. Naturally each must give of his to supply a neighbor's wants.<sup>28</sup> There was probably a more primitive, quasi-religious sanction. Among the tales dealing with strangers is one of a repulsive old man who was received by none but a poor woman. He rewarded her kindness and hospitality by revealing to her some secret cures of diseases.<sup>29</sup> Apparently the notion that the mana of a stranger may be uncommon and therefore he should be treated well, lies back of the tale.

In by-gone days the method of healing frequently was saturated with religious feeling which was essential for the success of the cure. Mention has been made of the fact that ordinarily the medicine man caused the patient to fast and himself performed various violent and unusual acts that induced in him a feeling of exaltation, without which he was unable to overcome the power of the demon that made the patient suffer. These doctors frequently were members of secret societies and these afford excellent illustration of how certain forms of behavior, that have become associated with religion, were essential in assuring the healing power of a medicine. One of the oldest of these societies, a Seneca medicine society called the Guardian of the Little Waters, is described in detail by Arthur C. Parker, himself a member, to whom the myth of the origin of the association was related by Cornplanter. The society is very old and its ritual is tinged but slightly by Christian notions. The whole *modus operandi* is saturated with religious feeling. Under no circumstances must the ceremonies and

<sup>27</sup> XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), 271-273; cf. XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 99; Parker, u. s., 22-23.

<sup>28</sup> Parker, 62-63.

<sup>29</sup> Canfield, 155-158; Mrs. Smith, 78.



secrets of the society be revealed to the uninitiated. The myth of the origin of the medicine related many weird occurrences that contributed to the magic efficacy of the medicine. A ritual must be performed at meetings in the dead of night to acquire and preserve unimpaired the power of the medicine. The medicine alone was not efficacious; its healing power depended upon the continued performance of a ritual. The society, as a member relates, was "instituted primarily to preserve and perform the ancient rites deemed necessary for preserving the potency of the . . . little waters, . . . and the method of its administration." The administration of the medicine necessitated acts that are recognized as religious. The patient must be purged. He must eat only white meat. The house must be rid of all uncleanly things, uncleanly animals and women in periodic condition. Now the medicine man comes. He repeats an ancient formula and casts some tobacco into the fire. Then he is given a cup containing water that was dipped only from a running stream and with the current. He drops the secret medicine, a powder, thrice into the water, forming a triangle. If the powder floats the patient will recover; if it clouds, the case is doubtful; but if it sinks—he dies. If it should happen that the patient is wounded, the medicine is sprinkled on the wound and is taken internally. After this, the doctor sings a chant and the matter is concluded with a feast of fruit.<sup>30</sup>

#### RELIGION AND PERSONAL MORALITY.

Among the Iroquois such duties as truth-telling and respect for the life, liberty and property of others were not universal obligations but held only for members of the group, except where treaties guaranteed a wider application on a reciprocity basis. The very name "Ongwe-honwe" which was applied to themselves by the Iroquois signified a unique people, a people who were apart from others, a people who had obligations one to another but who did not of necessity owe them to strangers. It is from this point of view that personal ethics among the Iroquois must be examined. What may be called the Iroquois

<sup>30</sup> Converse, 149–183, discusses secret societies; cf. Parker in *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., XI, 161–185; also Lafitau, I, 373 and Heckewelder, ch. XXXI.

code of morality has been stated by several writers. Canfield has given a summary for the nineteenth century, which, when stripped of Christian accretions, may be taken as an ideal statement of Iroquois moral rules, ideal because violations were known among them even as they are among us. It was wrong

"To neglect the old in any manner, or to refuse to share with them the fruits of the chase or the products of the fields," and it was especially wrong "to neglect or disregard aged or infirm parents.

"To speak in derision or slightingly of anyone who might be lame, blind, idiotic, insane—crippled in any manner or unfortunate in any degree, or to refuse them (sic) aid or shelter.

"To refuse to share food or shelter with anyone who might apply for either, or to fail to care for the sick and for orphan children and widows.

"To break any treaty or agreement made at the council-fire when the peace-pipe had been smoked, or after parties making the treaty had partaken of food together.

"To violate the chastity of any woman.

"To kill animals for any other purpose than for food and covering, and for the protection of growing crops and human life.

"To tell a falsehood, even though it might be of the most innocent character.

"To show cowardice in meeting any kind of danger or to shrink from exposure, pain, suffering, sickness or death.

"To take human life unless the person killed was a member of a tribe with which the Iroquois was at war."<sup>31</sup>

The Iroquois have been characterized frequently as more fierce and relentless than other peoples; as more revengeful and as rarely forgetting their revenge; as more uniformly merciless and cruel.<sup>32</sup> The Jesuits said not simply that they would do all they could for the Indians but that they would do it "in spite of all the rage of hell, and the cruelties of the Iroquois, who are worse than the demons of hell." An Iroquois did not condemn these dispositions in a warrior so long as they were controlled by the ideas and customs of the tribe. They were part of the warrior's outfit and were vented only upon strangers. The Iroquois who was not fierce, cruel and relentless permitted an enemy to live and perhaps thereby encompassed his own death; for the interminable Indian wars

<sup>31</sup> 172–173. Cf. Loskiel, Pt. I, 13–18; Stites, 144–146.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. XXIV *J. R.* (1642–1643), ch. XII. Also XXXIV *J. R.* (1649), 25–37; XLIII *J. R.* (1656–1657), 271. A full account of the treatment of condemned captives is given in XXXI *J. R.* (1647), ch. IV.

developed these dispositions in all warriors. The only religious influence connected with cruel practices was the exaction of torture and sacrifice by Agreskoue.

It was recognized by the older Iroquois that evil consequences resulted from the rash conduct of loosely controlled young men. Wars, heart-burnings and other troubles came in the train of such behavior. Education did not teach self-control, and the loose government together with the emphasis upon the warrior ideal constantly led young men to make outbreaks.<sup>33</sup>

Games of chance were enthrallingly interesting to the Iroquois. In fact so great a hold did some games have that they were played regularly at religious festivals. The Great Spirit himself, as announced by his emissary Handsome Lake, sanctioned some of these ancient games. But the Iroquois was so enamored of the game that often he staked his all, the loss of which brought hardship upon him and his.<sup>34</sup>

In a letter<sup>35</sup> written in January of 1668, Father Bruyas related what seemed to him to be the vices of the Iroquois. As a cultivated Frenchman he found only four, namely, lust for war, drunkenness, dreams and in chastity. "I have not observed," he continued, "any other vices in our Iroquois. They do not know what Cursing is."<sup>36</sup> I have never seen them become angry, even On occasions when our frenchmen would have uttered a hundred oaths, . . . As they live only from Day to Day, they do not desire much; and all their wishes end in having something to eat. . . . For my part, I compare them to our peasants in France, and I do not think that they are more intelligent. . . ."<sup>37</sup> Morgan, writing almost two hundred

<sup>33</sup> XXXI *J. R.* (1647), ch. V, 87; XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), 101, 103, 115, 137, 215.

<sup>34</sup> On games among the Iroquois see Hewitt: "Iroquois Game of La Crosse," *Am. Anthr.*, V, 189-191. Hough, W.: "Seneca Snow Snake Game," *Am. Anthr.*, I, 134. Parker: "Snow Snake Game," *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., XI, 250-256.

A general discussion of Iroquois games is given by Morgan, I, bk. ii, ch. V.

A complete discussion of Indian games is given by Culin, S.: *Games of the North American Indian*, Bur. Am. Ethn., Rep., XXIV, 3-809 (1902-1903).

<sup>35</sup> LI *J. R.* (1666-1668), 137 sq.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Loskiel, Pt. I, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *ib.*, 13.

years later, also gave a favorable summary.<sup>38</sup> He noted that among the Iroquois crimes were so infrequent that no special machinery was needed. The Iroquois regarded theft from a tribesman as wrong, but thieves hardly were known among themselves. The Iroquois doors never were locked. Murder of a tribesman was a crime for which the criminal paid with his own life, if the matter could not be adjusted with the injured kin by means of composition. Adultery was a crime for which the erring wife was whipped. Witchcraft was criminal and witches were put to death. Dissimulation was not an Iroquois habit. In 1742, in point of time midway between Bruyas and Morgan, Canassatego said, "The Indians know no Punishment but Death; they have no such Thing as pecuniary Mulcts; if a Man be guilty of a Crime, he is either put to Death, or the Fault is overlook'd."<sup>39</sup> In the Deganawida Myth is the command that a sachem should be deposed without warning if found guilty of murder, rape or theft.<sup>40</sup>

An Iroquois appreciated goodness of heart and justice; he treated peaceable strangers well; he relieved the afflicted, the sick and the poor; and he was sympathetic, respectful, generous, honest, grateful, faithful, industrious, patient, brave, daring and possessed of fortitude. Of course these dispositions were developed in his own way and according to his own customs and notions. Some of these attractive traits have been illustrated. A few additional examples will give body to the above enumeration.

One indication of the care given the sick is the following custom. If, among the group of women who worked the fields, there were some who were ill or otherwise incapacitated, help was given them in the performance of their work. Such aid was given freely. It was not given as charity but as a right and was performed as a duty.<sup>41</sup>

When in 1690 the French surprised the inhabitants of Schenectady, the Mohawk sachems came to Albany to condole with their friends. One of the sachems spoke thus:

<sup>38</sup> I, 321-326.

<sup>39</sup> Statement made before a council held July 9. Quoted by Colden, II, 95.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, 231; cf. Parker: *Constitution*, 34-36.

<sup>41</sup> Parker: *Maize*, 32.

sick  
women



"Brethren, the Murder of our Brethren at Schenectady by the French grieves us as much, as if it had been done to our selves, for we are in the same Chain (i. e., are friends). . . . Be not therefore discouraged. We give this Belt to wipe away your Tears.

"Brethren, we lament the Death of so many of our Brethren, whose Blood has been shed at Schenectady. . . . But now we gather up our Dead, to bury them, by this second Belt.

"Great and sudden is the Mischief, as if it had fallen from Heaven upon us. Our Forefathers taught us to go with all Speed to bemoan and lament with our Brethren, when any Disaster or Misfortune happens to any. . . .

"Brethren be patient, this Disaster is an Affliction with has fallen from Heaven upon us. The Sun, which hath been cloudy, and sent this Disaster, will shine again with its pleasant Beams. Take Courage. . . ."42

A less formal expression of the sense of loss was couched in the words of a sachem irritated by Sir William Johnson who was pressing the Iroquois for aid in King George's War just at a time when small-pox was raging among them. "You seem to think that we are Brutes, that we have no Sense of the Loss of our dearest Relations, and some of them the bravest Men we had in our Nation: You must allow us Time to bewail our Misfortune."<sup>43</sup>

Canassatego, speaking at a great council held in the summer of 1742, exhibited rare fineness of feeling when in the course of his speech he craved pardon for the Iroquois' uncleanness and offered recompense in the form of presents for having inconvenienced the white people.<sup>44</sup> On the same occasion he gave evidence that the Iroquois appreciated the efforts made in their behalf. Conrad Weiser had acted as an interpreter and they were grateful therefor. "He has had a great deal of trouble with us, wore out his Shoes in our Messages, and dirty'd his Clothes by being amongst us, so that he is become as nasty as an Indian. In return for these Services, we recommend him to your Generosity; and on our own Behalf, we give him Five Skins to buy him Clothes and Shoes with."<sup>45</sup> Another instance of such feeling is the following. A nephew

<sup>42</sup> Colden, I, 142-145.

<sup>43</sup> Beauchamp: *History*, 287.

<sup>44</sup> Colden, II, 110.

<sup>45</sup> *Ib.*, 111.

of Conrad Weiser had shot the son of Seneca George. At a council Frederick, son of Conrad, endeavored to soothe the old man. Seneca George was much affected by Frederick's words and replied, "He was all the Child I had; and now I am old, the loss of him hath almost entirely cut away my Heart, but I am yet pleased my Brother Weiser, the Son of my old Friend, has taken this Method to dry my Tears."<sup>46</sup>

That the Iroquois ever should have loved peace seems incompatible with their warlike proclivities. The older folks, however, found war to be not so desirable. When a peace was made with the French in the middle of the seventeenth century the following eulogy was delivered as a song of welcome to the ambassadors.

"Oh the beautiful land, the beautiful land,  
That the French are to occupy!

"Good news, very good news;  
In very truth, my brother, in very truth, we are speaking together;  
In very truth, we have a message from heaven.

"My brother I salute thee;  
My brother, be welcome.  
Ai, ai, ai, hi.  
O the beautiful voice, O the beautiful voice that thou hast.  
Ai, ai, ai, hi.  
O the beautiful voice, O the beautiful voice, that I have!  
Ai, ai, ai, hi.

"My brother I salute thee;  
Again I salute thee.  
In all sincerity and without simulation, I accept the heaven that  
thou has shown me;  
Yes, I approve it, I accept it.

"Farewell, war; farewell, hatchet!  
We have been fools till now;  
But in the future we will be brothers.  
Yes, we will really be brothers.

"To-day the great peace is made.  
Farewell, war; Farewell, arms!  
For the affair is entirely beautiful.  
Thou upholdest our Cabins, when thou comest among us."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Beauchamp, loc. cit., 335.

<sup>47</sup> XLII *J. R.* (1655-1656), 115-117.

Ambassadors and also ordinary strangers in times of peace were received with exclamations of pleasure and with gifts.<sup>48</sup> Messengers themselves were inviolable. It may be that once upon a time such emissaries, strangers, were under the care of some divine power. For Heckewelder, speaking of later times, said, "It was with them a point of religious belief, that pacific messengers were under the special protection of the Great Spirit, that it was unlawful to molest them, and that the nation which should be guilty of so enormous a crime would surely be punished by being unsuccessful in war, and perhaps, by suffering a total defeat."<sup>49</sup> It was a matter of pride with the Iroquois that solemn obligations were kept. Morgan and others testify that "To the faith of treaties the Iroquois adhered with unwavering fidelity."<sup>50</sup>

Colden relates that

"The Five Nations think themselves by Nature superior to the rest of Mankind, and call themselves Ongwe-honwe; that is, Men surpassing all others. This Opinion, which they take Care to cultivate into their Children,<sup>51</sup> gives them that Courage, which has been so terrible to all the Nations of North America; and they have taken such Care to impress the same Opinion of their People on all their Neighbours, that they, on all Occasions, yield the most submissive Obedience to them. . . . An old Mohawk Sachem, in a poor Blanket and a dirty Shirt, may be seen issuing his Orders with as arbitrary an Authority, as a Roman Dictator. It is not for the Sake of Tribute however, that they make War, but from the Notions of Glory, which they have ever most strongly imprinted on their Minds. . . ."<sup>52</sup>

It should be noted that such bravery was due largely, as Colden says, to social fostering. Scores of captives were adopted by the Iroquois and many acquired the full rights of an Iroquois. Many a brave Iroquois of the eighteenth century who drove fear into Huron hearts was himself a lineal descendant of a captive Huron of the seventeenth century. The Iroquois were a composite people. They were brave

<sup>48</sup> Cf. XLI *J. R.* (1654-1656), 99 and Beauchamp, loc. cit., 213.

<sup>49</sup> 182. Cf. La Hontan, II, 509 and note.

<sup>50</sup> I, 327.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Converse, 54-56. Hewitt denies that the term implies superiority. *Am. Anthr.*, n. s., XIX, 433.

<sup>52</sup> Colden, I, pp. xvii-xix; cf. Heckewelder, ch. XVIII.

largely because their traditions made them so.<sup>53</sup> Religious belief had no part in the development of this disposition.

SUMMARY OF THE LARGER RELATIONS OF RELIGION AND MORALS  
AMONG THE IROQUOIS.

From the standpoint of ethics, as defined for the Iroquois, the moral was an attribute of their religion. From the standpoint of religion two major facts concerning the relation of it to their morals, were prominent. Before the eighteenth century the Iroquois religion had slight connection with their virtues and vices. In those instances in which a connection was observed it was traceable either to the preaching of missionaries and of Handsome Lake or to the fact that the given disposition was called forth by some customary practice, some institution, that was affected by religion in ways described. But Iroquois virtues and vices were to be accounted for more fully by their entire social and physical environment rather than by the religious portion of it. On the other hand instituted practices, especially those connected with the uncommon and the uncomprehended rather than with the trite, with the attractive and the thrilling rather than with the matter of fact, were explicable to the native or had their requirements sanctioned and their value enhanced largely by religious beliefs and practices or the attitude implied by them.

The second great fact is the influence of Christianity. Missionary teaching effected some notable changes in the pagan religion. Since the eighteenth century and the days of Handsome Lake contact with Europeans gave the Iroquois a central and all important deity, helped to do away with a few beliefs and practices and partially clarified Iroquois ideas as to religious observance and personal morality. By means of the veneration for the Great Spirit and the power of Handsome Lake's preaching, Christianity increased the sense of the obligation to be personally virtuous and placed an additional religious sanction back of institutions. Since the last decade or two of the eighteenth century, the teachings of Handsome

<sup>53</sup> On the constant infusion of foreign blood see Bacqueville, III, 43-44; Parker: *Constitution*, 10; *Jesuit Relations* passim, particularly XLIII *J. R.* (1656-1657), ch. XII or the summary of the *Relations* in Donohoe.



Lake which summed up the many years of White influences, the Iroquois enforced peacefulness and their loss of the hitherto normal, manly occupations because of the decline of warfare and hunting, and the astonishing increases in White population, have been three important factors in standardizing religious observance, in producing economic influences observable during the festivals and in making the great, sacred feasts regularly recurring celebrations that could not fail further to dignify Iroquois religion. Additional comment upon these facts will be made in the course of the concluding, general discussion.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONCLUSION.

Now it is possible critically to examine the generally accepted view of the relation of religion to morality. The frequently recurring statement that the religious beliefs and practices of savages had slight bearing upon their morals, needs revision.<sup>1</sup> Writes in making that remark have been thinking of morality in terms chiefly of the virtues and vices of agents. They have given slight consideration to the morality of institutions,<sup>2</sup> except when some virtue or vice happened to depend upon customary practices. Their discussions have been handicapped seriously because the field has been narrowed, and the more subtle and important relations of religion and ethics have not come into view. The sphere of morality includes not only the obligations of agents but also the morality of institutions, that is, of standardized behavior. From this viewpoint it has become clear that in uncivilized societies, in which the social constitution had comparatively

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Introduction, Ch. I, above; also Morgan, II (note 62), 234, and Stites, 144.

<sup>2</sup> Students of religion usually have restricted the sphere of morality to personal ethics, while students of ethics usually have taken too narrow a view of religion. Hobhouse furnishes an excellent illustration. His "Morals in Evolution" has been of great value. But he chose to define religion in Tyler's terms, a definition no longer acceptable, and he overlooked the importance of religion for the moral sphere as an evaluating agency. Although he was aware of the influence of taboos as a sanction for conduct, he regarded the spirits that punished those who broke taboos as unmoral essentially. Moreover, despite his broad view of morality, he did not resist a tendency to view the morals of savages according to current European notions of ethical obligation. This weakness, together with his conception of the religion of savages in terms of beliefs and practices connected with spirits, rendered him incapable of seeing clearly the morality of institutions among savages. Finally, although most of their forms of behavior were standardized rather than merely personal, individual acts, he failed to grasp the importance of the moral function of religion in savage institutions, namely that of evaluation and sanction.

little differentiation, religion to some extent and in some way functioned in all the major and in those minor institutions that demanded attention,<sup>3</sup> whereas on the whole it functioned

<sup>3</sup> Durkheim was familiar with these subtle functions of religion. His "Elementary Forms of the Religious Life" was the ripe product of a noted French sociological school and had the advantage of intimate acquaintance with a wide field. His very fitness for his task has emphasized the greatest handicap under which investigators now labor. However deep was his knowledge of the Australians and other peoples, his acquaintance with the Iroquois was not intimate. He referred mainly to a few general works on Indians and to those by Schoolcraft and by Morgan. He nowhere questioned Schoolcraft's unreliable statements. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of his generalizations have been inapplicable to the Iroquois. He asserted, for example, that religion and morality are identical. The student of the Iroquois, however, has not felt satisfied with an explanation of their personal morality solely in terms of their religion. Too many other considerations of tradition, warfare, social and physical environment, and personal influence such as that of Handsome Lake, have made it desirable to seek additional explanations. Durkheim's premise makes impossible any such discussion of the morality of savages as has been given in this paper. Likewise, his lengthy argument concerning totemism, not only as the most primitive religion but also as the religion of the clan, has found no approving echo in the facts of Iroquois life. Although they had a definite clan system their religion historically has been divorced from totemic notions. Moreover, it is not true for the Iroquois that the members of a clan have been united mainly by religious bonds. The Iroquois in historical times appear to have viewed the clan tie secularly. They did not hesitate consciously to adopt into a clan some captive or some white man who rendered them great service. Furthermore, most religious rites were tribal, usually under phratric directions, and were not distinctly clan functions. In fact there is no conclusive evidence that among the Iroquois the totem ever had any religious function. Durkheim has said that the totem also was the source of the moral life of the clan. Too much has been learned regarding other Iroquois institutions for that assertion to be accepted. Their virtues and vices, for instance, have been explained more satisfactorily without the use of totemic notions. Indeed, although the Iroquois had a definite clan system, the totem and notions concerning it in historical times have had very slight moral influence. The clan figures in the organization of the League, yet neither the Deganawida Myth nor the actual structure of the Confederation shows that totem notions functioned in that institution. Such facts as these have made many of Durkheim's generalizations concerning the play of the totem in the religion and morals of peoples with clan organization inapplicable to the Iroquois. Nor has there been greater success in apply-

only indirectly and slightly in personal morality. The study of the Iroquois has shown that their religious beliefs and practices before the days of Handsome Lake had slight and incidental influence upon their personal ethics. An Iroquois was kind or cruel, hospitable or unfriendly, grateful or ungrateful, truthful or untruthful, honest or dishonest, revengeful or forgiving, not especially because religion commanded such conduct but rather he was such according as these universal human traits happened to be developed in him; such development depended chiefly upon heredity, upon education as described, upon the demands of savage life, and upon the ordinary social rules and traditions which governed a relatively small group of people and which of course were in part religious. On the other hand, this study has shown that their religion had marked and direct influence upon standardized behavior. A few institutions such as marriage, hospitality and property ownership, which lacked attention-compelling qualities, had slight religious influences working in them; but those institutions which occupied so much of the Iroquois' attention, such as the political and particularly the economic, had religious elements in their very structure and were consecrated

ing to them his dictum that the morality of religion consisted in the fact that religious forces were the impressions of society upon its members, society apparently being the mass of living persons in the community. Among the Iroquois the moral authority of the Great Spirit, for example, has been traced primarily to the teachings of foreign, white men and of Handsome Lake. That a boy performed certain initiation rites, an individualistic ceremony in many ways, appeared to have been due perhaps as much to such forces as personal ambition and his knowledge of tradition and custom, as to the impressions made upon him at puberty by the living group. In short, many facts among the Iroquois one has preferred to explain as much by means of their history, their culture, their traditions or their great men, as by the exertion of the social pressure of the given group.

Durkheim's study illustrates the pitfalls and handicaps that continue to confront those who generalize concerning the relation of religion and morals among many peoples. The application of the results of so fine a study as that made by Durkheim or by Hobbhouse reveals strikingly the crying need, on the part of students of the problem, for a series of studies of the relations of religion and morals in each of the many known groups of peoples, both of the present and of the past.



by the religious attitude. It is not true for the Iroquois, therefore, that the religion of savages has slight bearing upon their morals. Their religion was connected definitely with instituted practices, sometimes in the form of a taboo or of a myth that gave an explanation other than a worldly one, and usually as a positive sanction or obligation to perform some act and as an evaluating agency. Among the Iroquois the chief rôle of religion in the moral sphere was that of a valuating and sanctioning force. Moreover, this function of religion effected itself in the moral sphere more powerfully than did any other sanctioning or evaluating agency. Reflection upon the circumstances of their life makes apparent why their religion played such a part in morality. The Iroquois cultural outlook, their knowledge of the physical world in which they lived, and their life from day to day, both precluded the use on many occasions of sanctions and valuational standards that function among us and made effective religious forces in what we call non-religious activities.<sup>4</sup> In a really incomprehensible manner and respite his best personal efforts, the savage was disappointed in so many important desires and found so many crises to be truly fateful. An enemy might prove to be physically stronger, the seed might not grow, the boy may be an unsuccessful man, or the hunt may be fruitless. Under such circumstances and because of his outlook upon and the conditions of his life, the Iroquois had in religion his best instrument of control. One recalls how even their "face-to-face" relations, their marriage and property arrangements, and some other forms of behavior which normally happened not to attract attention or to be dangerous, under certain circumstances did become affected by religious influences. To insure wifely continence, for example, much to be desired but uncertain when one was off on a hunt or on the war-path, a quasi-religious sanction was imposed. Would not her misconduct in some mysterious way inevitably bring untold peril upon her husband? When, as in this case, a contingency has arisen that otherwise could not be guarded against, or when there has been encountered some religious element like the dead in the Condolence, the supernatural in the dream, or the incomprehensible power of the "little waters" in healing, religion is found to be

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ch. IV above.

connected with the institution as an integral element or rite, or as a taboo or sanction, or because of a value-giving sacred myth. All such matters certainly demanded attention. Their uncomprehended elements raised doubts, hinted at dangers, made success uncertain and stirred up many emotions. One turned naturally to the spirits who were able to help. The religious became the most important sanction in life.

The fundamental effect of missionary influence upon the Iroquois was to enlarge the sphere of the religious sanction behind behavior. It will be recalled that the introduction of Christianity, on the one hand, affected but superficially the religious influences already operating in or upon institutions. Some religious practices, such as the worship of Agreskoue, disappeared; additional beliefs, like that in the Great Spirit and in "heaven above," were accepted. Some myths were affected. The Creation Myth set forth a duality of good and evil that was Christian; the explanation of the founding of the League as given in the Deganawida Myth was subject to the influence of Christology. A few minor institutions became sanctioned by religion. For instance, customary ways of educating children came to be approved by the Great Spirit. But the old views persisted. Fundamentally, religious practices and the religious attitude manifested in institutional life were not modified.<sup>5</sup> The Christian Church and the cultured Europeans' conceptions both of it and of its relations to man and to God were simply not comprehensible to an untutored Iroquois. They were foreign cultural elements. But contact with Christian teaching, on the other hand, did affect fundamentally the forms of approval of virtues and of disapproval of vices. One remembers that the Jesuits, civilized religious teachers, laid great stress upon personal chastity, kindness and other virtues. That emphasis never was made so sharply by the Iroquois, because they were not so individualistic as the cultured missionaries. The former tended to act more similarly, that is, their behavior was more standardized or institutionalized. At those times and upon those occasions when some important action had to be performed and performed rightly, Iroquois behavior was ceremonial, the manner of acting being prescribed by religion which furnished the most important sanc-

<sup>5</sup> See Chs. III, IV, above.

tion. On such occasions a savage would say, as it were, that the god commands one to do thus, in much the same way that an Englishman urges conduct befitting a gentleman, or a Prussian expects conduct proper to a soldier, or an American remarks, "Act like a man." The Iroquois, already possessing gods and minor deities closely related to himself, could assimilate the notion that his kindness or respect or veracity was demanded by his gods. It was not altogether a foreign notion to him. It was an old one clarified and emphasized. Virtues and vices therefore could be and did become sanctioned or disapproved by religion. The crystallization of this influence came through Handsome Lake and his emphasis upon the character and the rôle of the Great Spirit. The results of missionary teaching as embodied in the career of Handsome Lake are truly remarkable.<sup>6</sup> Because of his work and that of the missionaries, the Iroquois in the nineteenth century present the rare spectacle of a savage people who name their virtues and vices and their duties one to another, who consciously regard them as sanctioned or forbidden by their greatest god, and who make it the duty of their religious officials, the Keepers of the Faith, regularly to remind the people of their moral obligations.

According to his preaching, the missionary believed not only that the chief function of religion in the moral sphere was to sanction personal ethics, but also that religion was the most important sanction for individual conduct. Among the Iroquois, religion rarely influenced individual behavior directly, but was the chief sanction that underlay standardized behavior, institutions. Missionary effort among the Iroquois makes this contrast vivid and provokes reflection. Apparently, while increasing complexity and specialization of human activities had developed in the Old World, religion had come to be regarded more and more as simply one element in society. Religion had come to exist alongside of business and politics. The priest had taken a place alongside the statesman, the soldier and the merchant. It does seem that as such changes occurred, that religion remained fresh and grew which, as society became more complex and individuation increased, shifted it emphasis from the divine in institutions to him who

<sup>6</sup> See above, pp. 59 sq., 85.

performed the act. In other words, with such changes, with increasing knowledge, and with the increasing importance of other interests, came the narrowing of the rôle of religion as a sanction more definitely to the strictly religious and to personal ethics, while the other interests and new knowledge furnished other powerful sanctioning and valuational forces. This shift has been becoming increasingly clear. In very recent times the emancipation of secular institutions from religion and its sanction has become almost complete. Another change appears to be taking place, for there now can be detected a new viewpoint toward the religious sanction that for so long underlay personal ethics. The Intellectual Revolution that began more than two centuries ago has been the largest factor in effecting this change. There have resulted new notions of spiritual personality which only effects and unfolds itself in and through the group. Ethical obligation, so envisaged, is becoming so binding that it is tending entirely to furnish the sanctions for conduct. Thus the old relation between religion and ethics among civilized peoples is breaking down. In fact some persons aver that religion is being divorced from ethics. But it seems that, in reality, a restatement of the relation is being made. So powerful are notions of ethical obligation becoming, so vital a sanctioning and evaluating agency for the development of what is being called spiritual personality are they growing to be, that even now religion is being defined from the viewpoint of ethics, while notions of ethical obligation are furnishing a sanction for religious conduct! Religious emotions, beliefs and practices are being molded by the results of ethical experience and are being used actively to aid the development, enlargement and realization of the ends set up by that experience.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Felix Adler: *An Ethical Philosophy of Life*. Appleton's, New York and London, 1918.



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